AMOS JUDD

By

J. A. MITCHELL

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BY

J. A. MITCHELL

ILLUSTRATED BY A. I. KELLER



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1901

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ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM DRAWINGS IN COLOR BY A. I. KELLER

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AMOS JUDD

I

AT the station of Bingham Cross Roads four passengers got off the train. One, a woman with bundles, who was evidently familiar with her surroundings, walked rapidly away through the hot September sunshine toward the little village in the distance.

The other three stood on the platform and looked about, as if taking their bearings. They were foreigners of an unfamiliar species. Their fellow-passengers in the car had discussed them with an interest not entirely free from suspicion, and their finally getting out at such an unimportant station as Bingham Cross Roads caused a surprise which, although reasonably under control, was still too strong for concealment. From the windows of the car at

least a dozen pairs of eyes were watching them. The two men and the little boy who composed this group were of dark complexion, with clean-cut, regular features. The oldest, a man of sixty years or more, had a military bearing, and was, if one could judge from appearances, a person of authority in his own country, wherever that might be. Although the younger man seemed to resemble him, it was in such a general way that he might be either his son or no relation whatever.

But the little boy had excited a yet greater interest than his companions. Although but six or seven years old, he comported himself with as much dignity and reserve as the gentleman with the silver hair. This gave the impression, and without apparent intention on his part, that he also was an important personage. His dark eyes were strikingly beautiful and, like those of his seniors, were distinctly foreign in design.

When the train moved away the three travellers approached the man with one suspender, who filled the position of station agent, baggage-master, switchman, telegraph operator and freight clerk, and inquired if there was a conveyance to the village of Daleford. He pointed to a wagon at the farther end of the platform; that was the Daleford stage. In answer to further questions they learned that the next train back again, toward New York, left at six thirty; that Daleford was seven miles away; that they could spend an hour in that village and catch the train without hurrying.

The only baggage on the platform consisted of two peculiar-looking trunks, or rather boxes, which the multifarious official knew to be theirs, as no similar articles had ever been manufactured in America. They were covered with designs laid on in metal, all elaborately engraved, and it was not suspected along the route that these profuse and tarnished or-

naments were of solid silver. This luggage was strapped behind the stage, two venerable horses were awakened and the travellers started off. Joe, the driver, a youth with large ears and a long neck, soon gave his passengers some excellent opportunities to explain themselves, which they neglected. Aside from a few simple questions about Daleford and Mr. Josiah Judd, to whose house they were going, the conversation was in a language of which he had no knowledge. The first two miles of their route lay along the Connecticut valley, after which they climbed to higher ground. The boy seemed interested in the size of the elms, the smell of the tobacco fields, the wild grapes, and the various things that any boy might notice who had never seen their like before.

The day was warm, and the road dusty, and when they entered Daleford the boy, with the old gentleman's arm about him, had been asleep for several miles. Coming into the vil-

lage at one end, they drove down the main street, beneath double rows of elms that met above their heads in lofty arches, the wide common on their right. The strangers expressed their admiration at the size and beauty of these trees. Moreover the cool shade was restful and refreshing. No signs of human life were visible either in the street or about the white houses that faced the common, and this with the unbroken silence gave an impression that the inhabitants, if they existed, were either absent or asleep.

The driver stopped for a moment at the post-office which occupied a corner in the only store, and gave the mail-bag to the post-mistress, a pale young woman with eye-glasses and a wealth of artificial hair; then, after rumbling through the village for half a mile, they found themselves again in the country.

The last house on the right, with its massive portico of Doric columns, seemingly of

white marble, had the appearance of a Grecian temple. But these appearances were deceptive, the building being a private residence and the material of native pine.

As they approached this mendacious exterior the little boy said something in the foreign language to his companions, whereupon they told the driver to stop at the door, as Mr. Judd was inside.

"That ain't Mr. Judd's house," he answered. "His is nearly a mile farther on, around that hill," and he gave the horses a gentle blow to emphasize the information. But the boy repeated his statement, whatever it was, and the younger man said, with some decision:

"Mr. Judd is inside. Stop here."

As the driver drew up before the house he remarked, with a sarcastic smile:

"If Mr. Judd lives here, he's moved in since mornin'."

But the remark made no visible impression.

They all got out, and while the two men approached the front door by an old-fashioned brick walk, the boy strolled leisurely through the grassy yard beside the house. The driver was speculating within himself as to what kind of a pig-headed notion made them persist in stopping at Deacon Barlow's, when, to his surprise, Mr. Judd emerged from a doorway at the side and advanced with long strides toward the diminutive figure in his path.

Mr. Judd was a man about sixty years of age, tall, thin and high-shouldered. His long, bony face bore no suggestions of beauty, but there was honesty in every line. The black clothes which hung loosely upon his figure made him seem even taller and thinner than he really was. The boy looked him pleasantly in the face and, when he had approached sufficiently near, said, in a clear, childish voice, slowly and with laborious precision:

"Josiah Judd, the General Subahdâr Divo-

das Gadi and the Prince Rájanya Kásim Mir Dewân Musnud desire to speak with you."

Mr. Judd stopped short, the bushy eyebrows rising high in astonishment. His mouth opened, but no sound came forth. The foreign appearance of the speaker, his familiar manner of addressing one so much older than himself, together with a demeanor that showed no signs of disrespect, and above all, his allusion to the presence of titled strangers caused the American to suspect, for a few seconds, that he was the victim of some mental irregularity. He pushed the straw hat from his forehead, and looked more carefully. The youthful stranger observed this bewilderment, and he was evidently surprised that such a simple statement should be received in so peculiar a manner. But Mr. Judd recovered his composure, lowered the bushy eyebrows, and drawing his hand across his mouth as if to get it into shape again, asked:

"Who did you say wanted to see me, sonny?"

A small hand was ceremoniously waved toward the two strangers who were now approaching along the Doric portico. Coming up to Mr. Judd they saluted him with a stately deference that was seldom witnessed in Daleford, and the General handed him a letter, asking if he were not Mr. Josiah Judd.

"Yes, sir, that's my name," and as he took the letter, returned their salutations politely, but in a lesser degree. He was not yet sure that the scene was a real one. The letter, however, was not only real, but he recognized at once the handwriting of his brother Morton, who had been in India the last dozen years. Morton Judd was a successful merchant and had enjoyed for some years considerable financial and political importance in a certain portion of that country.

DEAR JOSIAH: This letter will be handed you by two trustworthy gentlemen whose names it is safer not to write. They will explain all you wish to know regarding the boy they leave in your charge. Please take care of this boy at least for a time and treat him as your own son. I am writing this at short notice and in great haste. You have probably read of the revolution here that has upset everything. This boy's life, together with the lives of many others, depends upon the secrecy with which we keep the knowledge of his whereabouts from those now in power.

Will write you more fully of all this in a few days. Give my love to Sarah, and I hope you are all well. Hannah and I are in excellent health. Your affectionate brother,

MORTON JUDD.

P. S. You might give out that the boy is an adopted child of mine and call him Amos Judd, after father.

These words threw a needed light on the situation. He shook hands with the two visitors and greeted them cordially, then, approaching the boy who was absorbed in the movements of some turkeys that were strolling about the yard, he bent over and held out his hand, saying, with a pleasant smile:

"And you, sir, are very welcome. I think we can take good care of you."

But the child looked inquiringly from the hand up to its owner's face.

"Mr. Judd wishes to take your hand," said the General, then adding, by way of explanation, "He never shook hands before. But these customs he will soon acquire." The small hand was laid in the large one and moved up and down after the manner of the country.

"Don't they shake hands in India?" asked Mr. Judd, as if it were something of a joke. "How do you let another man know you're glad to see him?"

"Oh, yes, we shake hands sometimes. The English taught us that. But it is not usual with persons of his rank. It will be easily learned, however."

After a word or two more they took their seats in the wagon, the boy at his own request getting in front with the driver. They soon came in sight of the Judd residence, a large, white, square, New England farmhouse of the best type, standing on rising ground several hundred feet from the road, at the end of a long avenue of maples. Clustered about it were some magnificent elms. As they entered the avenue the driver, whose curiosity could be restrained no longer, turned and said to the boy:

"Did you ever see Mr. Judd before?"

"No."

"Then how did you know 'twas him?"

"By his face."

He looked down with a sharp glance, but the

boy's expression was serious, even melancholy.

"Ever been in this town before?"

"No."

"Did Mr. Judd know you was comin'?"

"No."

"Then what in thunder made you s'pose he was in Deacon Barlow's?"

"In thunder?"

"What made you think he was in that house?"

The boy looked off over the landscape and hesitated before answering.

"I knew he was to be there."

"Oh, then he expected you?"

"No."

Joe laughed. "That 's sort of mixed, ain't it? Mr. Judd was there to meet you when he didn't know you were comin'. Kinder met you by appointment when there was n't any." This was said in a sarcastic manner, and he added:

"You was pretty sot on stoppin' and I 'd like

to know how you come to be so pop sure he was inside."

The dark eyes looked up at him in gentle astonishment. This gave way to a gleam of anger, as they detected a mocking expression, and the lips parted as if to speak. But there seemed to be a change of mind, for he said nothing, looking away toward the distant hills in contemptuous silence. The driver, as a free and independent American, was irritated by this attempted superiority in a foreigner, and especially in such a young one, but there was no time to retaliate.

Mrs. Judd, a large, sandy-haired, strong-featured woman, gave the guests a cordial welcome. The outlandish trunks found their way up stairs, instructions were given the driver to call in an hour, and Mrs. Judd, with the servant, hastened preparations for a dinner, as the travellers, she learned, had eaten nothing since early morning.

When these were going on Mr. Judd and the three guests went into the parlor, which, like many others in New England, was a triumph of severity. Although fanatically clean, it possessed the usual stuffy smell that is inevitable where fresh air and sunlight are habitually excluded. There were four windows, none of which were open. All the blinds were closed. In this dim light, some hair ornaments, wax flowers, a marriage certificate and a few family photographs of assiduous and unrelenting aspect seemed waiting, in hostile patience, until the next funeral or other congenial ceremony should disturb their sepulchral peace. While the men seated themselves about the table, the boy climbed upon a long horse-hair sofa, whence he regarded them with a bored but dignified patience. The General, before seating himself, had taken from his waist an old-fashioned money-belt, which he laid upon the table. From this he extracted a surprising

number of gold and silver coins and arranged them in little stacks. Mr. Judd's curiosity was further increased when he took from other portions of the belt a number of English bank-notes, which he smoothed out and also laid before his host.

"There are twelve thousand pounds in these notes," he said, "and about two thousand in sovereigns, with a few hundred in American money."

"Fourteen thousand pounds," said Mr. Judd, making a rough calculation, "that 's about seventy thousand dollars."

The General nodded toward the boy. "It belongs to him. Your brother, Mr. Morton Judd, perhaps told you we left in great haste, and this is all of the available property we had time to convert into money. The rest will be sent you later. That is, whatever we can secure of it."

Now Mr. Judd had never been fond of re-

sponsibility. It was in fact his chief reason for remaining on the farm while his younger brother went out into the world for larger game. Moreover, seventy thousand dollars, to one brought up as he had been, seemed an absurdly large amount of money to feed and clothe a single boy.

"But what am I to do with it? Save it up and give him the interest?"

"Yes, or whatever you and Mr. Morton Judd may decide upon."

While Mr. Judd was drawing his hand across his forehead to smooth out the wrinkles he felt were coming, the General brought forth from an inner pocket a small silk bag. Untying the cord he carefully emptied upon the table a handful of precious stones. Mr. Judd was no expert in such things, but they were certainly very pretty to look at and, moreover, they seemed very large.

"These," continued the General, "are of

considerable value, the rubies particularly, which, as you will see, are of unusual size."

He spoke with enthusiasm, and held up one or two of them to the light. Mr. Judd sadly acknowledged that they were very handsome, and threw a hostile glance at the gleaming, many-colored, fiery-eyed mass before him. "How much do they represent, the whole lot?"

The General looked inquiringly at his companion. The Prince shook his head. "It is impossible to say, but we can give a rough estimate."

Then taking them one by one, rubies, diamonds, emeralds, pearls, and sapphires, they made a list, putting the value of each in the currency of their own country, and figured up the total amount in English pounds.

"As near as it is possible to estimate," said the Prince, "their value is about one hundred and sixty thousand pounds."



"One hundred and sixty thousand pounds!" exclaimed Mr. Judd. "Eight hundred thousand dollars!" and with a frown he pushed his chair from the table. The General misunderstood the movement, and said: "But, sir, there are few finer jewels in India, or even in the world!"

"Oh, that's all right," said Mr. Judd. "I'm not doubting their worth. It's only kind of sudden," and he drew his hands across his eyes, as if to shut out the dazzling mass that flashed balefully up at him from the table. For a New England farmer, Josiah Judd was a prosperous man. In fact he was the richest man in Daleford. But if all his earthly possessions were converted into cash they would never realize a tenth part of the unwelcome treasure that now lay before him. He was, therefore, somewhat startled at being deluged, as it were, out of a clear sky, with the responsibility of nearly a million dollars. The guests

also mentioned some pearls of extraordinary value in one of the trunks.

"Well," he said, with an air of resignation, "I s'pose there's no dodgin' it, and I'll have to do the best I can till I hear from Morton. After the boy goes back to India of course I sha'n't have the care of it."

The General glanced toward the sofa to be sure he was not overheard, then answered, in a low voice: "It will be better for him and will save the shedding of blood if he never returns."

But the boy heard nothing in that room. He was slumbering peacefully, with his head against the high back of the sofa, and his spirit, if one could judge from the smile upon his lips, was once more in his own land, among his own people. Perhaps playing with another little boy in an Oriental garden, a garden of fountains and gorgeous flowers, of queer-shaped plants with heavy foliage, a

quiet, dreamy garden, where the white walls of the palace beside it were supported by innumerable columns, with elephants' heads for capitals: where, below a marble terrace, the broad Ganges shimmered beneath a golden sun.

Maybe the drowsy air of this ancestral garden with its perfume of familiar flowers made his sleep more heavy, or was it the thrum of gentle fingers upon a mandolin in a distant corner of the garden, mingling with a woman's voice?

Whatever the cause, it produced a shock, this being summoned back to America, to exile, and to the hair-cloth sofa by the voice of Mrs. Judd announcing dinner; for the step was long and the change was sudden from the princely pleasure garden to the Puritan parlor, and every nerve and fibre of his Oriental heart revolted at the outrage. There was a war-like gleam in the melancholy eyes as he joined

the little procession that moved toward the dining-room. As they sat at table, the three guests with Mrs. Judd, who poured the tea, he frowned with hostile eyes upon the steak, the boiled potatoes, the large wedge-shaped piece of yellow cheese, the pickles, and the apple-pie. He was empty and very hungry, but he did not eat. He ignored the example of the General and the Prince, who drank the strong, green tea, and swallowed the saleratus biscuits as if their hearts' desires at last were gratified. He scowled upon Mrs. Judd when she tried to learn what he disliked the least. But her husband, swaying to and fro in a rocking-chair near the window, had no perception of the gathering cloud, and persisted in questioning his visitors in regard to India, the customs of the people, and finally of their own home life. Mrs. Judd had noticed the black eyebrows and restless lips were becoming more threatening as the many questions were an-

swered; that the two-pronged fork of horn and steel was used solely as an offensive weapon to stab his potatoes and his pie.

At last the tempest came. The glass of water he had raised with a trembling hand to his lips was hurled upon the platter of steak, and smashed into a dozen pieces. With a swift movement of his arms, as if to clear the deck, he pushed the pickles among the potatoes and swept his pie upon the floor. Then, after a futile effort to push his chair from the table, he swung his legs about and let himself down from the side. With a face flushed with passion, he spoke rapidly in a language of which no word was familiar to his host or hostess, and ended by pointing dramatically at Mr. Judd, the little brown finger quivering with uncontrollable fury. It appeared to the astonished occupant of the rocking-chair that the curse of Allah was being hurled upon the house of Judd. Standing for a moment in si-

lence and glowering upon them all in turn, the boy swung about with a defiant gesture, stalked through the open door and out of the house.

Josiah Judd, whose heart was already sinking under the responsibility of the crown jewels of a kingdom, experienced a sickening collapse in the presence of the Oriental thunderbolt that had just exploded on his peaceful New England hearthstone. His jaw fell, he ceased rocking, and turned his eyes in painful inquiry upon his guests.

There was an awkward silence. The General and the Prince had risen to their feet as if in apology to the hostess, but she had accepted the outburst with unruffled calmness. Her kind, restful, homely face showed no annoyance. Rising quietly from the table she followed the stormy guest and found him around in front of the house, sitting upon the granite door-step, his chin in his hands, frowning

fiercely upon the quaint old flower-garden before him. He got up as she approached and stood a few feet away, regarding her with a hostile scowl. Seating herself upon the step she said, with a pleasant smile:

"Of course you are tired, sonny, we all understand that, and you are unhappy to-day, but it won't be for long."

These assuring words failed of their purpose, and he eyed her sidewise, and with suspicion. He was too old a bird to be fooled so easily. A few sprigs were torn from the box border within his reach as if the conversation bored him.

"I had a boy once," continued Mrs. Judd. "I understand boys, and know just how you feel. We shall be good friends, I'm sure."

After a pause devoted to serious reflection, he inquired:

"Did your boy like you?"

"Oh, yes."

He came nearer and stood in front of her. Then, slowly and with the precision with which he always delivered himself when speaking English, he said:

"My mother was different from you, and her clothes were more beautiful, but if one boy liked you another might I might. Would you like to see my mother's portrait?"

Mrs. Judd said she would like very much to see it, and he began fumbling about and seemed to be tickling himself near the buckle of his belt. But, as it proved, he was ascertaining the whereabouts of a locket, which he finally fished up by means of a gold chain about his neck. The chain was of such a length that the locket, instead of reposing near the heart of the wearer, hung a little below the centre of the stomach. When it finally emerged above his collar, he placed the warm miniature in her hand, saying:

"That is my mother."

It was a dark face, surmounted by a jewelled head-dress of a style that Mrs. Judd had never seen, even in pictures. After looking more carefully at the miniature and then up into the eyes that were watching hers, she found the same square forehead and sensitive mouth, and the same dark melancholy, heavily fringed eyes, by far the most beautiful she had ever seen. The picture in her hand was a truthful portrait of himself. As she looked from the portrait into the face before her she felt it was perhaps fortunate this mother was ignorant of the changes that already had turned the current of his life. With a brown hand on each of her knees he was looking into her eyes with the anxious gaze of a hungry soul, seeking for sympathy, and too proud to ask it. But Mrs. Judd understood. She laid a hand upon his shoulder with an expression upon her honest face that rendered words unnecessary. He blinked and swallowed in a

mighty effort to suppress what he evidently considered an undignified and compromising sentiment. But in vain. Sinking upon his knees he buried his face in her lap and gave way to the most vehement, uncontrollable grief. The small frame shook with sobs, while her apron grew wet with tears. He took his sorrow with the same passionate recklessness that characterized his anger at the dinner-table. Mrs. Judd rested her hand upon the short black hair and tried to summon words of solace for a grief that seemed to threaten the integrity of his earthly body. She could only stroke his head and tell him not to be unhappy; that all would end well; that he should soon return home.

In the midst of these efforts the voice of Mr. Judd came around the corner calling out that the wagon was here. The boy jumped to his feet as if he had received a shock. Drawing the sleeve of his jacket across his tear-

stained face, he summoned an expression of severity and indifference that under other circumstances would have forced a smile from his newly acquired friend. The soldier was himself again; the warrior was on parade. As they walked together around the house to the dining-room, he beside her with a resolute step and chin in the air, she wondered what manner of training could have taught him at the age of seven to suppress all boyish emotions, and put on at will the dignity of a Roman Senator.

The General and the Prince were awaiting them. With many compliments they thanked the host and hostess for their hospitality, and regretted the necessity that took them away in such unfortunate haste; it was a flying trip and their absence must not be lengthened by an hour, as these were troublous times in their part of India. As they moved toward the wagon Mrs. Judd held her husband back,

believing there might be a parting at which strangers would not be welcome. But the parting, like all else, was dignified and ceremonious. She could not see the boy's face, for he stood with his back toward her, but as far as she could judge he also was calm and self-possessed. She noticed, however, that the General had to swallow, with a sudden gulp, a large portion of what appeared to be a carefully constructed sentence.

They drove in silence down the long avenue beneath the maples, and the driver, perhaps to put them at their ease, said something about getting along faster in this light wagon than with the stage, but both his passengers seemed in a silent mood and made no answer. As they turned into the main road the General, who was on the side nearest the house, looked back. At the farther end of the avenue stood the boy in the same position, still watching them. The old soldier brought his hand to

his hat and down again in a military salute that was evidently familiar to the little person at the farther end of the driveway, for it was promptly acknowledged, and although a farewell to the last ties between himself and his country, was returned with head erect, as from one veteran to another.

II

TWENTY years have passed.

The corner mansion of the Van Koovers is ablaze with light. Long rows of carriages surmounted by sleepy coachmen extend along Madison Avenue and into the neighboring street. The temporary awning from the front door to the curbstone serves only to shield the coming and departing guest from the gaze of heaven, for the moon and stars are shining brightly, as if they also would like to enter. But when the front door opens, which is frequent, it emits a blast of music, taunting and defiant, reminding the outside universe of its plebeian origin.

Inside there is a scene of festivity and splendor, of dazzling gayety, of youth and mirth and decorous joy. The opulence of the Van Koovers is of sanctifying solidity, and when they give a ball they do it in a style to be remembered.

The house itself, with its sumptuous furniture, its magnificent ceilings and stately dimensions is sufficiently impressive in every-day attire, but to-night it reminds you of the Arabian Tales. The family portraits, the gracious dignity of the host and hostess, the bearing of the servants, all speak of pedigree and hereditary honors.

Roses and violets, in lavish profusion, fill every corner, are festooned around doors and windows, even along the walls and up the stairs, their perfume mingling with the music. And the music, dreamy yet voluminous, sways hither and thither a sea of maidens with snowy necks and shimmering jewels, floating gracefully about in the arms of anxious youths. These youths, although unspeakably happy, wear upon their faces, as is usual upon such occasions, an expression of corroding care.

As a waltz came to an end, a tall, light-haired girl with crimson roses in her dress,

dropped into a seat. She fanned herself rapidly as if to drive away a most becoming color that had taken possession of her cheeks. Her breath came quickly, the string of pearls upon her neck rising and falling as if sharing in the general joy. With her long throat, her well-poised head, and a certain dignity of unconscious pride she might be described as old-fashioned from her resemblance to a favorite type in the portraits of a century ago. Perhaps her prettiest feature was the low, wide forehead about which the hair seemed to advance and recede in exceptionally graceful lines. Her charm to those who know her but superficially was in her voice and manner, in the frankness of her eyes, and, above all perhaps, in that all-conquering charm, a total absence of self-consciousness. But whatever the reason, no girl in the room received more attention.

Her partner, a sculptor with a bald head and a reputation, took the chair beside her.

As her eyes wandered carelessly about the room she inquired, in an indifferent tone: "Who is that swarthy youth talking with Julia Bancroft?"

"I don't know. He looks like a foreigner." Then he added, with more interest, "But is n't he a beauty!"

"Yes, his features are good."

"He is an Oriental of some sort, and does n't quite harmonize with a claw-hammer coat. He should wear an emerald-green nightcap with a ruby in the centre, about the size of a hen's egg, a yellow dressing-gown and white satin trousers, all copiously sprinkled with diamonds."

She smiled. "Yes, and he might be interesting if he were not quite so handsome; but here he comes!"

The youth in question, as he came down the room and passed them, seemed to be having a jolly time with his companion and he failed to notice the two people who were discussing

him. It was a boyish face notwithstanding the regular features and square jaw, and at the present moment it wore a smile that betrayed the most intense amusement. When he was well out of hearing, the sculptor exclaimed: "He is the most artistic thing I ever saw! The lines of his eyes and nose are superb! And what a chin! I should like to own him!"

"You couldn't eat him."

"No, but I could put him on exhibition at five dollars a ticket. Every girl in New York would be there; you among them."

Miss Cabot appeared to consider. "I am not so sure. He probably is much less interesting than he looks. Handsome males over three years of age are the deadliest bores in life; sculptors of course excepted."

"It does seem to be a kind of prosperity the human male is unable to support without impairment." Then addressing a blasé young man lounging wearily by:

"Horace, do you know who that is talking with Miss Bancroft?"

Horace, a round-shouldered blond whose high collar seemed to force his chin, not upward, but outward horizontally, fingered the ends of a frail mustache and asked:

"You mean that pigeon-toed fellow with the dark face?"

Miss Cabot could not help laughing. "There's a summing up of your beauty," she exclaimed, turning to the sculptor.

He smiled as he answered: "It is evident you are an admirer. But do you know who he is?"

"Yes, I know him."

"Well, what is it? A Hindu prince, a Persian poet, or a simple corsair of the Adriatic?"

"He is a Connecticut farmer."

"Never!"

"And his name is Judd—Amos Judd."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Miss Cabot. "What a come down! We hoped he was something more unusual than that."

"Well, he *is* more unusual than that. He is a paralyzer of the female heart. I knew him in college. At dances and parties we were generally sure to find him tucked away on the stairs or out on a porch with the prettiest girl of the ball, and he looked so much like an Oriental prince we used to call him the Bellehugger of Spoonmore."

"Disgusting!"

"But that is a trifling and unimportant detail of his character, Miss Cabot, and conveys a cold impression of Mr. Judd's experiences. Don Giovanni was a puritanical prig in comparison. Then at college he had the bad taste to murder a classmate."

Miss Cabot looked up in horror.

"But then he had his virtues. He could drink more without showing it than any fel-

low in college, and he was the richest man in his class."

"Oh, come now, Horace," said the sculptor, "you are evidently a good friend of his, but your desire to do him a good turn may be carrying you beyond the limits of—how shall I say it?"

"You mean that I am lying."

"Well, that is the rough idea."

Horace smiled. "No, I am not lying. It is all true," and he passed wearily on.

It was not many minutes before Molly Cabot was again moving over the floor, this time with the son of the house. Stephen Van Koover was one of those unfortunates whose mental outfit qualified him for something better than the career of clothes and conversation to which he was doomed by the family wealth.

"This recalls old times. Isn't it three or four years since we have danced together?" he asked. "Or is it three or four hundred?"

"Thank you! I am glad you realize what you have missed."

"You do dance like an angel, Miss Molly, and it's a sin to squander such talent on me. I wish you would try it with Judd; my sisters say his dancing is a revelation."

"Judd, the murderer?"

"Who told you that?"

"Horace Bennett."

"I might have guessed it. Truth and Horace were never chums. Judd bears the same relation to Horace as sunshine to a damp cellar."

As the music ceased they strolled to a little divan at the end of the room.

"He did kill a man, a classmate, but he had the sympathies of his entire class. It was partly an accident, anyway."

"I am glad for his sake, as there seems to be a prejudice against murder."

"This was a little of both. We were having a supper, about twenty of us, just before class-

day. After the supper, when we were all a trifle hilarious, Slade came up behind Judd and poured some wine down his neck. Judd faced about; then Slade made a mock apology, and added an insulting speech. He was a master in that sort of thing, and while doing it he emptied his wineglass into Judd's face. Now Judd is overweighted with a peculiar kind of Oriental pride, and also with an unfortunate temper; not a bad temper, but a sudden, unreliable, cyclonic affair, that carries the owner with it, generally faster than is necessary, and sometimes a great deal farther. Now Slade knew all this, and as he was an all-around athlete and the heavier man, there was no doubt in our minds that he meant Judd should strike out, and then he would have some fun with him.

"Well, Judd grew as black as a thundercloud, but he kept his temper. His hand shook as he wiped his face with his handkerchief

and quietly turned his back upon him. Then it was that the other man made the crowning error of his life. He was just enough of a bully to misunderstand Judd's decent behavior, and his contempt was so great for one who could accept such an indignity that he kicked him. Judd wheeled about, seized him by the throat and banged his head against the wall with a force and fury that sobered every fellow in the room. Close beside them was an open window reaching to the floor, with a low iron railing outside. Judd, half lifting him from the floor, sent him flying through this window, and over the balcony."

"Gracious! Was he dead from the blows on his head?"

"No, but a blow awaited him outside that would have finished an ox. This window was about thirteen feet from the ground, and below it stood a granite hitching post. When Slade came down like a diver from a boat and

struck head foremost against the top of this post something was sure to suffer, and the granite post is there to-day, with no signs of injury."

"How can you speak of it in such a tone!"

"Well, I am afraid none of us had a deep affection for the victim. And then Judd was so refreshingly honest! He said he was glad Slade was dead; that the world would be better if all such men were out of it, and refused to go to the funeral or to wear the usual class mourning."

"Which was in disgustingly bad taste!"

"Possibly, but uncommonly honest. And then it is hardly fair to judge him by our standards. He is built of foreign material, and he had received something that it was simply not in his nature to forgive."

Their voices were drowned in the music that again filled the room. The dance over, they sauntered out into the large hall, where Flem-

ish and Italian tapestries formed an opulent harmony with Van Koover portraits. In the air of this apartment one breathed the ancestral repose that speaks of princely origin. It was not intended, however, that this atmosphere should recall the founder of the house who, but four generations ago, was peddling knick-knacks along the Bowery.

As Miss Cabot was uncomfortably warm and suggested a cooler air he led her to the farther end of the long hall, beyond the stairs, and halted at the entrance of a conservatory.

"Delicious!" and she inhaled a long breath of the fresh, moist air.

"Wait for me just a moment, and I will bring you the glass of water," and he vanished.

An inviting obscurity pervaded this conservatory, which, like the rest of the Van Koover mansion, was spacious and impressive. At the farther end, the gloom was picturesquely broken by rays of moonlight slanting through

the lofty windows. The only living occupants seemed to be one or two pairs of invisible lovers, whose voices were faintly audible above the splashing of the little fountain in the centre. This busy fountain formed a discreet accompaniment to the flirtations in the surrounding shrubbery. Stepping to the side of the basin, she stood for a moment looking down into its diminutive depths. The falling water and the distant music formed a soothing melody, and a welcome restfulness stole gently upon her senses as she inhaled, with the fragrance of the tropics, the peace and poetry of a summer night. She stood for a moment yielding to a gentle enchantment; it seemed a different world, apart from the great city in which she lived, a world of flowers, and perfumes, of fountains and perpetual music; of moonlight and of whispering lovers.

At last, as if waking from a dream, the girl raised her head and looked toward the win-

dows beyond, where a flood of moonlight illumined deep masses of exotic foliage, repeating them in fantastic shadows on the marble floor. Walking slowly from the fountain, she lingered between the overhanging palms, then stepped into the moonbeams, a radiant figure with her bare neck and arms and glistening jewels in this full white light, against the gloom of the conservatory. The diamonds in the crescent above her forehead flashed as if quivering into life as she stopped and looked up at the planet.

A figure close beside her, that had formed part of the surrounding shadow, started back with a suddenness that caused her, also, to retreat a step and press a hand to her heart. It was more from nervousness than fear, as she was simply startled. She at once recovered herself, ashamed at being taken off her guard, but a glance at the man beside her, whose face was now also in the light, filled her with a

fresh surprise. It was the Oriental beauty; the murderer, Judd, and the intensity of his expression almost frightened her. His eyes were fixed upon her own in speechless wonder, and as they moved to the crescent in her hair, then back again to her face, they showed both terror and astonishment. Yet it seemed a look of recognition, for he bent eagerly forward, as if to make sure he were not mistaken.

It was all in an instant. Then, with a step backward and an inclination of the head, he stammered:

"I beg your pardon. I—I was startled. Pray forgive me."

He gave an arm to his companion, a pretty girl in pink who, standing behind him, had missed the details of the little scene, and they walked away among the plants and out of the conservatory.

Later in the evening, as Miss Cabot stood near the door of the ball-room, the girl with

whom she was speaking introduced a friend, and she found herself again in the presence of the Connecticut farmer, the young man of the moonlight. But this time he wore a very different expression from that of the conservatory. There was a pleasant smile on the dark and somewhat boyish face as he apologized for the scene among the plants. "I am sorry if it annoyed you, but I was startled by an unexpected resemblance."

She looked into his eyes as he spoke, and understood why the sculptor should have been enthusiastic over such a face. It was of an unfamiliar type, and bore a curious resemblance to those she had attributed as a child to the heroes of her imagination. The eyes were long, dark, and seemed capable of any quantity of expression, either good or bad. Miss Cabot was uncertain as to whether they pleased her. At present they looked somewhat anxiously into her own with a touch of misgiving. Neverthe-



less, she felt that he was telling her only a portion of the truth.

"If it is my misfortune to startle unsuspecting guests when I come upon them without notice, it is for me to apologize. No," then continuing hastily, as he began a protestation: "You need n't explain! Do not trouble yourself to tell me that only the most disturbing types of beauty cause you just that kind of a shock."

"But why not, if it is the truth? Besides, as you stepped out into the moonlight you were a blinding apparition, all in white, against the darkness behind. I have no doubt the moon herself was a little startled."

"You certainly were less happy in concealing your agitation than the — other victim."

Although his manner was deferential and gave indications of a positive but discreetly repressed admiration, she felt ill at ease with him. It was impossible to forget his repulsive

title, and turning partly away she looked over the room, and answered:

"Since you are completely recovered and my apology is accepted, I suppose there is nothing more to be done."

As the words were uttered the opening strains of a waltz came floating across the hall, and he begged that she give him a dance in token of absolution. It was easier to grant it than to refuse, and in another moment they were gliding over the floor. As they moved away she experienced a new sensation. This partner, while adapting himself to her own movements, carried her with a gentle force that relieved her of all volition. While, in effect, borne up and along by the music, she was governed by a pressure that was hardly perceptible; yet, at a critical instant, when a reckless dancer came plunging toward them, she felt herself swung lightly from his path, to relapse at once into a tranquil security and

float peacefully away. This floating with the music was so easy, so very drowsy and relaxing, that her consciousness almost drifted with the rhythm of the waltz. Once, as her eyes were uplifted to the gorgeous frieze, the white-winged Cupids that a moment before were lolling idly against the blue and gold background seemed now to be keeping time with the music, swaying and dancing in their irresponsible nakedness.

Miss Cabot was surprised when the music ceased and at once regretted having danced such a length of time with a stranger of unsavory reputation. As they left the ball-room and entered the ancestral hall she was flushed and out of breath, endeavoring with one hand to replace a lock of hair that had fallen about her neck.

"It's a shame," he muttered.

"What? That we danced so long?"

"Oh, no! That it should ever end!"

They looked about for a resting-place, but all were occupied. Girls in pink, in white, in pale blue, in delicate yellow, in every color that was becoming to their individual beauty, or to its absence, were clustered about the great hall, filling every seat. Around them, like bees in a flower garden, hovered men in black.

"There is our chance," he said, pointing to the stairs. Upon the first landing, but three steps from the floor, there was a semicircular recess along whose wall ran a cushioned seat. At the entrance, upon a pedestal of Sienna marble, sat a Cupid with a finger upon his lips; a bit of ancient sculpture from a Roman temple. Behind him, within, an inviting gloom suggested repose and silence. As they stepped upon the tiger-skin that nearly covered the landing, Miss Cabot was accosted by a man whose thoughtful face brightened up at the meeting. When he glanced at her companion

there was a similar welcome, and they called each other John and Amos, and appeared to be on intimate terms. After a short conversation he left them and descended into the hall. She was puzzled at the friendship of these two men, and wondered what there could possibly be in common between a promising clergyman of exceptional purity of character and this dissolute, hot-headed Judd. As they seated themselves in the alcove, she said, in a tone of surprise:

"So you and John Harding are friends!"

He smiled. "Yes; and I lament your astonishment."

She blushed at her stupid betrayal of the thought, while he made no effort to conceal his amusement.

"It may be an unkind thing to say of him, but we have been good friends for several years."

Laying her fan in her lap, she devoted both

hands to the wandering lock. "Is that what drove him to the church?"

"No. For that I am not responsible, thank Heaven!"

"Why thank Heaven? Is there any harm in being a clergyman?"

"It depends on the man. In this case it certainly seems a waste of good material."

Now, it happened that Molly Cabot's religious convictions were deeply rooted, and she felt a thrill of indignation at this slur upon a sacred calling. Of course, it was not surprising that a spoiled youth with a murderous temper should prove an atheist and a scoffer, but she was irritated, and instinctively took the field as the champion of a righteous cause.

"Then you consider it a waste of good material for an honest man to serve the church?"

Her energy surprised him, but he answered, pleasantly: "I do not say that. No one is too

good for any honest work. I only say that a man of John Harding's originality and courage puts himself in a false position by so doing."

"I do not see how," and her eyes were fixed upon his own in open hostility. He still smiled serenely and met her glance with provoking calmness.

"Well, at present he is young and full of enthusiasm, believing everything, and more besides; but he is only twenty-seven now and will do a heap of thinking before he is forty. The pathetic part of it is that he binds himself to a creed, and the man who can think for thirteen years on any subject without modifying his faith ought to be in a museum."

"Not if it is the true faith."

"If it is the true faith, there is danger in thinking, as he may think away from it; so why waste a brain like Harding's?"

In spite of a certain deference and gentleness of tone with which he uttered these posi-

tive sentiments there was evident enjoyment in the shock they created. While he was speaking she noticed in the centre of his forehead a faint scar about the size of a thimble end. It seemed an evanescent mark, only visible when he turned his face at certain angles with the light, and suggested the thought that if all young men of such opinions were marked in a similar manner it might serve as a wholesome warning to unbelievers.

She looked down at her fan a moment, then answered, very quietly:

"So all clergymen over forty are either hypocrites or fools. It must be very satisfying to entertain a thorough contempt for so large a profession."

"Oh, don't say contempt. Rather an excess of sympathy for the unfortunate."

At that moment Horace Bennett, in ascending the stairs, stopped for an instant upon the landing and stood facing them. His eyes rested

upon herself and Mr. Judd, then she saw him glance at the marble Cupid who, with his finger to his lips, seemed acting as a sentinel for whatever lovers were within. Then he pulled the ends of his miserable little mustache, and with a half-suppressed smile muttered something to his companion, and they passed up the stairs. The hot blood flew to her cheeks as she recalled what he had said earlier in the evening of this man beside her: "We were sure to find him tucked away on the stairs or out on the porch with a girl. So we called him the Bellehugger of Spoonmore."

Never in her life had she felt so degraded, so cheapened in her own esteem. Hot, cold, with burning cheeks, and tears of mortification in her eyes she rose from her seat, pressing a handkerchief against her lips, and stepped swiftly out upon the landing and down into the hall. Mr. Judd followed and inquired anxiously if she were ill; could he do anything?

His solicitude, which was genuine, caused her to realize how extraordinary her behavior must appear to him. The close air in the alcove, she answered coldly, must have affected her. It was only a little dizziness.

To her great relief a young man came hurrying up, and exclaimed:

"I have been looking everywhere for you, Miss Cabot! The cotillion is on!"

A formal nod to Mr. Judd, and she moved away with an unuttered prayer that their paths in future might be far apart. Her wish was granted, at least for that night, for she saw him no more at the Van Koovers'.

When she reached home and entered her own chamber, the moonlight was streaming into the room, and before turning up the lights she had the curiosity to stand near the window with a hand-glass and study her own reflection. Only the usual face was there, and as usual, the nose was too short, the chin

too long, and all the other defects were present; but even in the moonlight they seemed hardly sufficient to frighten a strong young man.

III

A FIRST interview with the Hon. J. W. Cabot, senior member of the firm of Cabot, Hollingsworth & Perry, generally resulted in a belief that this distinguished lawyer was a severe, unsympathetic man whose dignity, under ordinary pressure, was not likely to abate. An abundant crop of short gray hair covered a square, well-shaped head; a head that seemed hard and strong. His forehead, his jaw, and his shoulders were also square, and they also seemed hard and strong.

His manner was cold, his voice firm and even, and he was never ruffled. The cool gray eyes rested calmly upon you as if screening, out of consideration for your own fallacious knowledge, the profundity of wisdom that reposed behind them. His memory seemed infallible. The extent and accuracy of his legal knowledge was a perpetual surprise, even to

his partners. For simplifying complex entanglements his clearness and rapidity amounted to a genius. His fees were colossal. In short, he seemed just the man who would never write such a note as this:

TOWHEAD:

I SHALL bring an old friend to dinner to-night.

Don't give us rubber olives or shad of last year's vintage. He is not a bric-à-brac shop.

JIMSEY.

This document was sent to his daughter, who since her mother's death, three years ago, had managed the household. When a child of five she overheard a friend address him frequently as Jim, whereupon she adjusted a final syllable to render it less formal, and ever after continued to use it.

It was an afternoon in March that this note arrived, nearly four months after the ball at

the Van Koovers', and when, an hour or two later, her father presented his old friend, Mr. Samuel Fettiplace, she was struck by his enormous frame and by the extraordinary color of his face. This color, a blazing, resplendent red, not only occupied his nose and cheeks, but extended, in quieter tones, over his forehead and neck, even to the bald spot upon the top of his head. It had every appearance of being that expensive decoration that can only be procured by a prolonged and conscientious indulgence in the choicest Burgundies.

His large, round, light-blue eyes were all the bluer from their crimson setting. A more honest pair she had never seen. These, with his silver hair and benevolent forehead, gave the impression of a pleasantly intemperate bishop. Molly Cabot well knew that her father, and especially her mother, could never have achieved a warm and lasting friendship for one whose habits were honestly represented by such compromising colors.

With old-fashioned courtesy he gave her his arm into the dining-room, and as they seated themselves at table he said: "You look like your mother, Miss Molly, and I am glad of it; the same forehead and eyes, and the same kind expression. I was afraid when I saw you last you were going to look like your father. He isn't so bad looking, considering the life he has led, but it would be a calamitous thing for a well-meaning girl to resemble any lawyer."

She laughed: "But papa is not as bad as he looks, you know."

"Yes, he is; I have known him longer than you have. But there seem to be honors in dishonor. During these years that I have been trotting about the globe he has been climbing higher and higher, until now his legs are dangling from the topmost round. Why, I understand that none but the solidest billionaires and the fattest monopolies presume to retain him."

"I am afraid someone took you for a hay-

seed, Sam, and has been stuffing you."

"No, they have not!" exclaimed the daughter. "Everybody says he is the best lawyer in New York. He has refused to be a judge several times!"

"Oh, come, Molly! Don't make a fool of your old father!"

"Go ahead, Miss Molly," cried Mr. Fettiplace. "Don't mind him! I know you are right. But I suppose he pays the customary penalty for his greatness; slaves day and night, both summer and winter, eh?"

"Yes, he does, and if you have any influence with him, Mr. Fettiplace, I wish you would bring it to bear."

"I will. He shall do just as you decide."

"Now, Molly," said Mr. Cabot, "be just. Have I not promised to take a three months' vacation this summer?"

"Where do you spend the summer?" asked Mr. Fettiplace.

"I don't know yet. We gave up our place at the shore two years ago. The salt air does not agree with me any too well; and neither Molly nor I care for it particularly."

There was a pause, and the guest felt that the wife's death might have saddened the pleasant memories in the house by the sea. As if struck with an idea, he laid down his fork and exclaimed:

"Why not come to Daleford? There is a house all furnished and ready for you! My daughter and her husband are going abroad, and you could have it until November if you wished."

"Where is that, Sam?"

"Well," said Mr. Fettiplace, closing his eyes in a profound calculation, "I am weak at figures, but on the map it is north of Hartford and about a quarter of an inch below the Massachusetts border."

Mr. Cabot laughed. "I remember you were

always weak at figures. What is it, a fashionable resort?"

"Not at all. If that is what you are after, don't think of it."

"But it is not what we are after," said Molly. "We want a quiet place to rest and read in."

"With just enough walking and driving," put in the father, "to induce us to eat and sleep a little more than is necessary."

"Then Daleford is your place," and the huge guest, with his head to one side, rolled his light-blue eyes toward Molly.

"Do tell us about it," she demanded.

"Well, in the first place Daleford itself is a forgotten little village, where nothing was ever known to happen. Of course births, marriages, and deaths have occurred there, but even those things have always been more uneventful than anywhere else. Nothing can take place without the whole village knowing

it, and knowing it at once: yet the inhabitants are always asleep. No one is ever in sight. If you should lock yourself in your own room, pull down the curtains and sneeze, say your prayers or change a garment at an unaccustomed hour, all Daleford would be commenting on it before you could unlock the door and get downstairs again."

"That sounds inviting," said Mr. Cabot. "There is nothing like privacy."

"I only tell you this so there shall be no deception. But all that does not really concern you, as our house is a mile from the village." Then he went on to describe its real advantages: the pure air, the hills, the beautiful scenery, the restful country life, and when he had finished his hearers were much interested and thought seriously of going to see it.

"I notice, Sam, that you make no mention of the malaria, rheumatism, or organized bands of mosquitoes, drunk with your own blood,

who haul you from your bed at dead of night. Or do you take it for granted we should be disappointed without those things?"

"No, sir. I take it for granted that every New Yorker brings those things with him," and again a large china-blue eye was obscured by a laborious wink as its mate beamed triumphantly upon the daughter.

There were further questions regarding the house, the means of getting there, and finally Molly asked if there were any neighbors.

"Only one. The others are half a mile away."

"And who is that one?" she asked.

"That one is Judd, and he is an ideal neighbor."

"Is he a farmer?"

"Yes, in a way. He raises horses and pups and costly cattle." Then, turning to Mr. Cabot. "It is the young man I brought into your office this morning, Jim."

"Well, he is too beautiful for the country! If I could spend a summer near a face like that I should n't care what the scenery was."

"Is his name Amos Judd?" asked Molly.

"Why, yes. Do you know him?"

"I think I met him early this winter. His reputation is not the best in the world, is it?"

Mr. Fettiplace seemed embarrassed. He took a sip of wine before answering.

"Perhaps not. There have been stories about him, but," and he continued with more than his habitual earnestness, "I have a higher opinion of him and would trust him farther than any young man I know!"

She felt, nevertheless, that Mr. Judd's reputation might not be a proper subject for a young lady to discuss, and she remained silent. But her father was not a young lady, and he had heard nothing of the improprieties of the young man's career. "What is his particular line of sin?" he inquired.

"He has none. At present he is all right; but at college, and that was five years ago, I am afraid he took a livelier interest in petticoats than in the advertised course of study."

"Of course he did," said Mr. Cabot. "That beauty was given him for the delectation of other mortals. To conceal it behind a book would be opposing the will of his Creator."

"Poor Amos," said Mr. Fettiplace with a smile, as he slowly shook his head. "His beauty is his curse. He regards it as a blight, is ashamed of it, and would give a good deal to look like other people. Everybody wonders who he is and where he came from. As for the women, they simply cannot keep their eyes away from him."

"If I were a woman," said Mr. Cabot, in a slow, judicial manner, "I should throw my arms about his neck and insist upon remaining there."

Mr. Fettiplace chuckled, not only at the

solemnity of his friend's face during the delivery of the speech, but at the contemptuous silence with which this and similar utterances were received by the daughter. There had always been a gentler and more lovable side to James Cabot, and he was glad to see that success and honors had not destroyed the mental friskiness and love of nonsense that had been an irresistible charm in former years. He was also glad to witness the affection and perfect understanding between father and daughter. It was evident that from long experience she was always able to sift the wheat from the chaff, and was never deceived or unnecessarily shocked by anything he might choose to say.

"Well, he will be here soon," said Mr. Fettiplace, "but as you are only a man, you may have to content yourself with sitting in his lap."

"Is Mr. Judd coming here this evening?"

inquired Molly, in a tone that betrayed an absence of pleasure at the news.

Her father looked over in mild surprise. "Yes, did I forget to tell you? I asked him to dine, but he had another engagement. He is to drop in later. And, by the way, Sam, where did the young man get that face? No line of Connecticut farmers bequeathed such an inheritance."

"No, they did not. Judd's little mystery has never been cleared up. I can only repeat the common knowledge of Daleford, that the boy was brought to this country when he was about six years old, and that a few handfuls of diamonds and rubies came with him. The value of this treasure has been exaggerated, probably, but with all allowances made it must have amounted to more than a million dollars."

"Why!" exclaimed Molly. "It's quite like a fairy tale!"

"Yes, and the mystery is still agoing. Josiah Judd, in whose hands he was placed, happened to be the only person who knew the boy's history, and he died without telling it. Who the child was or why he was sent here no one knows and no one seems likely to discover. Josiah died about twelve years ago, and ever since that time stray clusters of emeralds, pearls, and diamonds have been turning up in unexpected places about the house. Some are hidden away in secretary drawers, others folded in bits of paper behind books. They have tumbled from the pockets of Josiah's old clothes, and a few years ago his widow discovered in one of his ancient slippers an envelope containing something that felt like seeds. On the outside was written 'Amos's things.' She tore it open and found a dozen or more magnificent rubies, rubies such as one never sees in this country. They were sold for over two hundred thousand dollars."

"Gracious!" exclaimed Molly, "what possessed him to leave them in such places? Was he crazy?"

"On the contrary, he was too wise. Not wishing to dispose of them in a lump, he did it gradually, and concealed them for greater safety in different places, so that no one thief could steal them all. Whenever he sold them he invested the proceeds in solid securities. No one knows to what extent the old farmhouse is still a jewel casket. It is more than likely that cracks and corners to-day are hiding their precious stones."

"How mysterious and exciting!" exclaimed Molly. "It seems too romantic for practical New England."

"That is just the trouble with it," said her father. He leaned back in his chair and continued, with a smile, "I suspect our guest has been reading his 'Monte Cristo' lately, which may account for a pardonable exaggeration in

a historian who means to be honest. Who told you all this, Sam? The Judds' family cat?"

Mr. Fettiplace drew his hand slowly across his forehead and closed his blue eyes, as if hesitating for a reply. "There is so much that is hard to believe connected with Amos that one ought to prepare his audience before talking about him. I will tell you one little thing that happened to myself, an occurrence not dependent upon other people's credulity. One day last autumn, late in the afternoon, I was walking along an untravelled road through the woods, when I met two little children who were playing horse. The front one, the horse, wore a garment that looked like a white silk overcoat without sleeves. Otherwise the children were roughly clad, with battered straw hats and bare feet. The overcoat had a curious, Oriental cut, and there was a good deal of style to it; so much, in fact, and of such a foreign flavor, that I stopped to get a better look at

it. The wearer, a boy of eight or ten, I recognized as the son of an unprosperous farmer who lived in a dilapidated old house not far away. When I asked him where he got his jacket he said he wore it at the children's tableaux: that he was the prince who awoke the sleeping beauty in the town hall last night. Then I remembered there had been a performance to raise money for the library.

"While talking with him I noticed there were four rows of little pearl-shaped buttons around the neck and down the front. They formed part of an elaborate design, beautifully embroidered in gold and silver thread, old and somewhat tarnished, but in excellent preservation. I asked him what those ornaments were, and he answered they were beads. 'But who owns the jacket?' I asked: 'Does it belong to you?' No, it belonged to Mrs. Judd, who had lent it for the performance. 'Then why don't you return it to Mrs. Judd?'

Oh, they were going to return it to-morrow morning. I offered to take it, as I was going that way, and the jacket was handed over.

"The more I examined the article, the more interested I became, and finally I sat down on a rock and made a study of it. I found the garment was of white silk and completely covered with a most elaborate stitching of gold and silver thread. I am no expert in precious stones, but I knew those beads were either pearls or tremendously clever imitations, and when I remembered there was a good old-fashioned mystery connected with Amos's arrival in these parts, I began to feel that the beads stood a fair chance of being more than they pretended. I counted a hundred and twenty of them.

"When I took the garment to Mrs. Judd and told her what I thought, she did n't seem at all surprised; simply told me it had been lying in a bureau-drawer ever since Amos

came, about twenty years ago. She is over eighty and her memory has gone rapidly the last few years, but she closed her eyes, stroked her hair, and said she remembered now that her husband had told her this jacket was worth a good many dollars. And so they always kept it locked away in an upstairs drawer, but she had forgotten all about that when she offered it to the Faxons for their performance. Down the front of the jacket were large splashes of a dark reddish-brown color which she said had always been there, and she remembered thinking, as she first laid the coat away, that Amos had been in some mischief with currant jelly. Amos was away just then, but when he returned we took all the beads off, and a few days later I showed a dozen of them to a New York jeweller who said they were not only real pearls, but for size and quality he had seldom seen their equal."

"They must have been tremendously valuable," said Molly.

"They averaged twelve hundred dollars apiece."

"Gracious!" she exclaimed. "And there were a hundred and twenty of them?"

"Yes; they brought a little more than a hundred and forty thousand dollars."

"It all harmonizes with Judd's appearance," said Mr. Cabot; "I should not expect him to subsist on every-day American dividends. But it's a good jacket, even for fairy land."

"Yes, it certainly is, and yet there was the usual touch of economy in it," Mr. Fettiplace continued. "When we came to remove the pearls, we found a little gold loop or ring in the setting behind each one of them. Those loops passed through a sort of circular buttonhole in the garment, and a gold wire, running along beneath the silk, held the jewels in

place, so that by drawing out the wire they were all detached."

"Well, where was the economy in that?"

"By being adjusted and removed so easily they probably served, when occasion required, as necklace, belt, bracelets, earrings, diadems, or the Lord knows what."

"Of course," assented Mr. Cabot. "A frugal device that might be of service to other farmers. And you began, Sam, by describing Daleford as an uneventful place. It seems to me that Bagdad is nothing to it."

Mr. Fettiplace sipped his coffee without replying. After a short silence, however, with his eyes upon the coffee which he stirred in an absent-minded way, he continued:

"There are one or two other things connected with Judd which are much more difficult to explain. Daleford is full of mysterious tales of supernatural happenings in which he is the hero of prophecies and extraordinary

fulfilments; always incredible, but told in honest faith by practical, hard-headed people. Any native will give them to you by the yard, but the hero, under no conditions, ever alludes to them himself."

"Which probably proves," said Mr. Cabot, "that the hero is the only one to be relied on. It is such fun to believe in the incredible! That is the charm of miracles, that they are impossible."

The rosy guest turned to the daughter with a smile, saying: "And there is nothing like a hard-headed old lawyer to drag you back to earth."

"What were these tales, Mr. Fettiplace? What did they refer to?" she asked.

But Mr. Fettiplace evidently felt that he had said enough, possibly because a portion of his audience was not of encouraging material, for he only answered in a general way that the stories related to impossible

experiences, and were probably only village gossip.

After dinner they sat around the fire in the next room, the two men with their cigars and Molly at work over a bit of tapestry representing the Maid of Orleans on a fat, white horse. This horse, according to her father, must have belonged to a Liverpool circus, and was loaned to Joanna for tapestry only. When Mr. Judd appeared Molly felt an augmented interest in this hero of the white jacket, but it was against both conscience and judgment and in spite of a pious resolve to consider him simply as a libertine with a murderous temper. That her father and Mr. Fettiplace had no such abhorrence was evident from their cordial greeting.

The conversation became general, although the burden of it was borne by Mr. Fettiplace, who seemed to possess upon every subject either some interesting facts or a novel theory. Once, when he was telling them something

so amusing that it seemed safe to count upon a strict attention from all his hearers, she looked over at Mr. Judd and found his eyes fixed earnestly upon her face. It was a look so serious, of such infinite melancholy that, in surprise, her own glance involuntarily lingered for a second. He at once turned his eyes in another direction, and she felt angry with herself for having given him even so slight a testimonial of her interest. Although a trivial episode, it served to increase the existing hostility and to strengthen an heroic resolve. This resolve was to impress upon him, kindly but clearly, the impossibility of a serious respect on her part for a person of such unenviable repute. Later, when the two older men went up into the library to settle some dispute concerning a date, he came over and seated himself in a chair nearer her own, but also facing the fire.

"Your ears must have tingled this evening, Mr. Judd."

"Ah, has Mr. Fettiplace been giving me away?"

"On the contrary; he is a stanch friend of yours."

"Indeed he is, but it might require an exceedingly skilful friend to throw a favorable light on such a subject."

"How delightfully modest! I assure you he gave you an excellent character."

"Did you think it a wilful deception, or that he was simply mistaken?"

She turned and saw upon his face an amused smile, half triumphant yet good-humored. She lowered her eyes to the bronze ornament on the table that was slowly revolving between her fingers. "Am I so incapable of believing good of others?"

"Certainly not! But when I saw you last I suffered from an unpleasant belief that neither the Devil nor myself were objects of your adoration. So I took the liberty of putting one

or two things together, and decided that the faithful Bennett might have honored me by a mention."

"Why suspect Mr. Bennett of such a thing?"

"Well, partly because he is a vindictive and unscrupulous liar, and partly because he is the only enemy I saw there."

This was said gently, in his usual low voice, with perfect calmness, and it was said amiably, as if sympathizing with an unfortunate friend.

"You seem able to meet him on his own ground."

"Oh, no! There is all the difference in the world."

She looked toward him interrogatively, but with an expression that plainly indicated a difference of opinion. He continued in the same tone, with no sign of animosity: "The difference is this, that he tells others what he never tells me. I tell others his mind is filthy and his

spirit is mean; that he is without honor and that he is a liar, but I also tell *him*."

"You have told him that?"

"Often: sometimes to himself alone, sometimes in the presence of others."

She could not restrain a smile. "It must be a pleasant thing to tell a man!"

"A man? Oh, that would be a different matter!"

There was a barbaric simplicity in all this that she could not help respecting, particularly as she felt he was telling the truth: and she sympathized with him heartily in this opinion of Horace Bennett. While openly unforgiving and vindictive, he appeared to regard his enemy with the half-serious contempt of a gentle but experienced philosopher. But she remembered her resolution.

"Mr. Fettiplace has been telling us about that white jacket. What an interesting story!"

"Yes, everything he tells is interesting. He has a rare faculty in that direction."

"But in this case he had an unusual subject. It is like a fairy story. I suppose you wore it some time or other?"

"I suppose so."

"But you must remember."

"Vaguely. I was only seven years old when I came to this country and I never wore it here."

"Have you even forgotten how you spilled the currant jelly down the front?"

"Currant jelly?" he repeated, and looked inquiringly toward her. "I have not heard that theory."

"You were the culprit and ought to know. But strawberry is just as bad, I suppose."

After a slight hesitation he answered, "Those are blood-stains."

Turning toward him for further information, she could not help thinking how much more

he was in harmony with a tale of pearls and mystery and human blood than with jam or currant jelly. As he made no answer but sat gazing absently at the fire, she expressed a hope that his youthful nose had not collided with the stairs or with the fist of some larger boy.

"No, not that exactly," he replied, with his eyes still upon the fire. "It is a long story and would not interest you." Then looking up, he continued, with more animation, "I am glad there is a possibility of your coming to Daleford. It is an ideal place to be quiet in."

"So Mr. Fettiplace tells us, but you are mistaken about the history of the jacket. It *would* interest me, and I should like extremely to hear it; unless of course you prefer not to tell it."

"If you wish to hear it that is reason enough for the telling, but—is n't it rather cruel to force a man to talk only about himself?"

"No; not in this case. It gives an opportunity to prove, by the perfection of your boyhood, that you are less vile than you believe Horace Bennett to have painted you."

"That would be impossible. No human record could wipe out an effect once laid in by such a hand. Besides, there is nothing in the jacket to repair a damaged reputation."

"The fact of telling the story will count in your favor."

"In that case I will make an effort." He rested an elbow on the arm of his chair, slowly stroking the back of his head as if uncertain where to begin. "It is really a foolish thing to do," he said at last, "but if you are relentless I suppose there is no escape. In the first place, to begin at the very beginning, there was a little court with arches all around it, with grass in the centre and a fountain at each corner. On the marble steps, at one end, we were all sitting, a dozen or more children,

watching a man with a bear and two monkeys. These monkeys had sham fights. One was dressed like an English soldier with a red jacket, and he always got the worst of it. It was great fun and we all laughed."

"Where was this?"

"In India. At the very beginning of the show, when the English monkey for a moment was on top, a servant rushed into the court and dragged me away. It was a barbarous deed, and I was ugly; as disagreeable probably as Horace Bennett could have wished. So I only lose ground, you see, by telling this story."

"Never mind. Unless you tell it I shall believe the worst."

"Well, looking back as I was dragged along, the last thing I saw was the red monkey being chased and beaten by the white one, and they scrambled right up the bear's back. In the chamber where we went that white jacket was

brought out and I made another row, for I knew it meant a long and tiresome performance in which I had to keep still and behave myself."

"A performance on a stage?"

"No; in a large room, with lots of people standing about. As our procession started for the big hall, which was several rooms away on another side of the house, I noticed that my uncle and one or two others kept closer to me than usual. There was a tremendous haste and confusion, and everybody seemed excited."

In telling his story Mr. Judd spoke in a low voice, pronouncing his words clearly and with a certain precision. His only gesture consisted in occasionally drawing a hand slowly up the back of his head, as if finding solace in rubbing the short thick hair in the wrong direction. Although his voice and manner suggested an indolent repose, she noticed that the brown hands, with their long fingers, were hard and

muscular, and were the hands of a nervous temperament.

"When we entered the large hall there were lots of people, mostly soldiers, and in uniforms I had not seen before. The principal person seemed to be a short, thick-set man with a round face and big eyes, who stood in the centre of the room, and his wide sash and odd-looking turban with gold scales interested me tremendously. We all stood there a few minutes and there was a good deal of talk about something, when all of a sudden this man with the handsome turban seized me under the arms with both hands, lifted me up, and handed me to a big chap behind him.

"Then came a free fight, a general commotion, with shouting and rushing about, and sword-blades in the air. A friend tried to pull me away, but the big man who held me laid his head open with a blow. A second later the big man himself received a cut from my uncle

at the base of his neck, where it joins the shoulder, that made him stagger and turn half about: then he tumbled to the floor and held me all the tighter as he fell. As we landed I came on top, but he rolled over and lay across me with his head on my stomach. He was so heavy that he held me down and the blood poured from his neck over my white clothes."

Molly had stopped working. With her hands in her lap and her eyes fixed eagerly on his face, she uttered an exclamation of horror. He said, with a smile:

"Not a cheerful story, is it?"

"It is awful! But what happened then?"

"Well, as I struggled to get from under I saw my uncle turn upon the first man, the leader, but he was too late. Someone gave him a thrust, and he staggered and came down beside us. I remember he lay so near that I reached out and touched his cheek

with my finger. I spoke to him, but he never answered."

There was a silence, she watching him, waiting for the rest of the story, while he gazed silently into the fire.

"And what happened next?"

"Oh, excuse me! That is about all. During the hubbub and slaughter my people hauled me from beneath the big chap and I was hurried away. I remember, as we ran through the chambers near the little court, I heard my friends still laughing at the monkeys."

He seemed to consider the story finished. "May I fool with that fire?" he asked.

"Certainly, but what was all the fighting about?"

As the fire was encouraged into a fresher life he answered: "I never knew distinctly. That night a few others and myself went down to the river, through the gardens, were

rowed to a little steamer and taken aboard. We sailed down a long river, and afterward a big steamer brought three of us to America. And then to Daleford."

"Why on earth to Daleford?"

"Because it was desirable to land me in some amusing metropolis, and I suppose the choice lay between Paris and Daleford. Daleford, of course, won."

"I beg your pardon," she hastened to say. "My curiosity seems to be running away with me."

"Oh, please do not apologize. There is no secret about Daleford. I only answered in that way as I suddenly realized how refreshing it must be to hear a stranger tell pathetic stories about himself. It is I who apologize. They brought me to Daleford through Mr. Judd's brother, who was a good friend and was with us at that row."

He stood before the fire with the poker in

his hand, and looked down with a smile as he continued: "I believe you have never been to Daleford, but if you were a field-mouse that could sleep all winter, and didn't care to be disturbed in summer, you would find it an ideal spot. If you were a field-mouse of average social instincts you would never pull through."

"And yet Mr. Fettiplace advises us to go there."

"Oh, that's for a summer only, and is quite different."

From Daleford they went to other subjects, but to her his own career proved of far greater interest, and the usual topics seemed commonplace and uneventful by comparison. Delicately and with subtle tact, she made one or two efforts to get further information regarding his childhood and the fabulous jewels, but her endeavors were vain. Of himself he talked no more. In a sense, how-

ever, she was rewarded by a somewhat surprising discovery in relation to his mental furniture. When the conversation turned incidentally upon literature she found him in the enjoyment of an ignorance so vast and so comprehensive that it caused her, at first, to doubt the sincerity of his own self-conviction. Of her favorite books he had not read one. To him the standard novelists were but names. Of their works he knew nothing. This ignorance he confessed cheerfully and without shame.

"But what do you do with yourself?" she demanded. "Do you never read anything?"

"Oh, yes; I have not forgotten my letters. For modern facts I read the papers, and for the other side of life I take poetry. But the modern novel is too severe a punishment. It is neither poetry nor wisdom."

Until the two other men came down from

the library she had no idea of the lateness of the hour. Mr. Fettiplace laid a hand on the young man's shoulder and, with a roseate smile, explained the situation.

"This fellow is from the country, Miss Molly, and you must excuse him for expecting, when invited out to dinner, that he is to remain to breakfast."

A moment or two later, as the three men were standing before the fire, she was astonished by a bit of unexpected wisdom. He was regarding with apparent interest a little etching that hung near the mantel, when Mr. Cabot explained that it was a very old one he had purchased in Germany, and represented the battle of Hennersdorf. Mr. Judd thought it must be the battle of Mollwitz, and gave as reasons for his belief the position of the Prussians in relation to a certain hill and the retreat of the Austrian cavalry at that stage of the fight. Mr. Cabot, obviously surprised at

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these details, replied, jokingly, that he was not in a position to contradict a soldier who was present at the battle.

This afforded great amusement to the rubicund guest, who exclaimed:

"You might as well back right down, Jim! Amos is simply a walking cyclopædia of military facts; and not a condensed one either! He can give you more reliable details of that battle than Frederick himself, and of every other battle that has ever been fought, from Rameses to U. S. Grant. He remembers everything; why the victors were victorious and how the defeated might have won. I believe he sleeps and eats with the great conquerors. You ought to see his library. It is a gallery of slaughter, containing nothing but records of carnage—and poetry. Nothing interests him like blood and verses. Just think," he continued, turning to Molly, "just think of wasting your life in the nineteenth century when you feel that

you possess a magnificent genius for wholesale murder that can never have a show!"

There was more bantering, especially between the older men, a promise to visit Daleford, and the two guests departed.

IV

IN April the Cabots took their trip to Daleford and found it even more inviting than Mr. Fettiplace had promised. The spacious house among the elms, with its quaint old flower-garden, the air, the hills, the restful beauty of the country, were temptations not to be resisted, and within another month they were comfortably adjusted and felt at home.

The house, which had formerly belonged to Mr. Morton Judd, stood several hundred feet from the road at the end of an avenue of wide-spreading maples. This avenue was the continuation of another and a similar avenue extending to the house of Josiah Judd, directly opposite, and the same distance from the highway. As you stood at either end it was an unbroken arch from one residence to the other. When Mr. Morton Judd was married, some fifty years ago, his father had erected this abode

for him, but the young man soon after went to India, where as a merchant and a financier he achieved success, and where both he and his wife now lay at rest. Although covering as much ground, the house was less imposing than the more venerable mansion at the other end of the avenue.

The journey beneath the maples proved such a pleasant one and was so easily made as to invite a certain familiarity of intercourse that the Cabots saw no good reason to discourage. Mrs. Judd, a strong-framed woman with a heavy chin, whose failing memory seemed her only weakness, was now about eighty years of age, and generally sat by a sunny window in the big dining-room, where she rocked and knitted from morning till night, paying little attention to what went on about her. If Amos had been her own son she could not have loved him more, and this affection was returned in full with an unceasing thoughtful-

ness and care. Both Molly and her father were gratified at finding in this young man a neighbor whose society it seemed safe to encourage. He proved a sensible, unpretending person, fond of fun and pleasure, but with plenty of convictions; these convictions, however, while a source of amusement to Mr. Cabot, were not always accepted by the daughter. They were often startling departures from his education and environment, and showed little respect for conventionalities. He never attended church, but owned a pew in each of the five temples at Daleford, and to each of these societies he was a constant and liberal contributor. For three of them he had given parsonages that were ornaments to the village, and as the sectarian spirit in that locality was alive and hot these generous gifts had produced alternating outbursts of thankfulness and rage, all of which apparently caused neither surprise nor annoyance to the young philosopher. When

Molly Cabot told him, after learning this, that it would indicate a more serious Christian spirit if he paid for but a single pew and sat in it, he answered:

"But that spirit is just the evil I try to escape, for your good Christian is a hot sectarian. It is the one thing in his religion he will fight and die for, and it seems to me the one thing he ought to be ashamed of. If any one sect is right and the others wrong it is all a hideous joke on the majority, and a proper respect for the Creator prevents my believing in any such favoritism."

Occasionally the memory of his offensive title obtruded itself as a bar to that confidence which is the foundation of friendship, but as she knew him better it became more difficult to believe that he could ever have been, in its coarser sense, what that title signified. As regarded herself, there was never on his part the faintest suggestion of anything

that could be interpreted as love-making, or even as the mildest attempt at a flirtation. She found him under all conditions simple and unassuming, and, she was forced to admit, with no visible tokens of that personal vanity with which she had so lavishly endowed him. His serious business in life was the management of the Judd farm, and although the care and development of his animals was more of a recreation than a rigid necessity he wasted little money in unsuccessful experiments. Mr. Cabot soon discovered that he was far more practical and business-like than his leisurely manners seemed to indicate. The fondness for animals that seemed one of his strongest characteristics was more an innate affection than a breeder's fancy. Every animal on his place, from the thoroughbred horses to the last litter of pups, he regarded more as personal friends than as objects of commercial value.

When Mr. Cabot and Molly made their first visit to the farm, they noticed in the corner of a field a number of dejected horses huddled solemnly together. Most of them were well beyond middle age and bore the clearest indications of a future that was devoid of promise. They gazed at the visitors with listless eyes, and as a congregation seemed burdened with most of the physical imperfections of extreme antiquity.

"What on earth are those?" asked Mr. Cabot. "Revolutionary relics? They are too fat for invalids."

"A few friends of my youth."

"I should think from the number you have here that you never disposed of your old friends," said Mr. Cabot.

"Only when life is a burden."

"Well, I am glad to see them," said Molly, as she patted one or two of the noses that were thrust toward her. "It does you credit.

I think it is horrid to sell a horse that has used himself up in your service."

As the father and daughter walked homeward along the avenue of maples, Mr. Cabot spoke of the pleasure the young man derived from his animals, and the good sense he displayed in the management of his farm.

"Yes," said Molly, "and he seems too boyish and full of fun for anything very weird or uncanny. But Mr. Fettiplace certainly believed in something of that kind, did n't he?"

"Of course, or he would n't be Fettiplace. That sort of thing is always interesting, and the world is full of people who can believe anything if they once put their minds on it. Who is that in our yard?"

"Deacon White, I think. He has come to train up some plants for me." A moment later she took her father's arm and asked, with affected humility: "Jimsey, will you do something?"

"No, for it's sure to be foolish."

"Well, you are right, but you can do it so much better than I. Deacon White has probably known Mr. Judd ever since he was a little boy, and he would be glad of an opportunity to tell what he knows and give us all the town talk besides. I do wish you would just start him off."

"Start him off! On what? Judd's private history? On the delicate matters he doesn't wish advertised?"

"No, no! Of course not, papa! How unpleasant you are! I only want him to throw some light on the mysterious things Mr. Fettiplace alluded to."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. If you really have a thirst for that sort of knowledge, get a copy of Hans Andersen. He has a better style than Deacon White."

A few moments later, when Molly and the Deacon were alone in the old garden, her de-

sire for information was gratified to an unhoped-for extent, and the information was of a more detailed and astonishing character than she would have presumed to ask for. The Deacon, a little, round-shouldered, narrow-chested man of seventy, with a sun-dried face, an enormous nose, and a long receding chin with a white beard beneath, possessed a pair of wide-awake eyes that seemed many years younger than himself.

"I never have anything to do with roses without thinkin' of Amos. Did you ever notice his?"

"Yes; they are splendid ones."

"Ain't they! Well, one mornin', when he was a little boy, I was helpin' him set out roses along the side of the house where the big trellis is, and he said he wanted red ones, not yellow ones. I said: 'These are red ones. They are cut from the same slip as the others, and they've got to be red whether they want

to or not.' Pretty soon Josiah came out, and Amos said to him that he could see 'em next spring and they would all be yellow. And what took me all aback was that Josiah believed it, and tried to persuade him that he might like yellow ones for a change. And I tell you," said the Deacon, as he fixed his little young eyes on her face to watch his effect, "I just stood with my mouth open one mornin', a year after, when I saw those roses, that oughter been red, just come out into a yeller. Of course it was a mistake in the bushes, but how did he know?"

"It might have been a coincidence."

"Yes, it might have been a coincidence. But when a boy's life is made up of just those things you begin to suspect after a while that perhaps they are too everlastingly reliable for coincidences. You can't always bet on coincidences, but you can bet every time on Amos. My daughter Phœbe kept school down in the

village for a spell when Amos was about ten years old. There was another boy, Billy Hines, who never missed a lesson. Phœbe knew he was a dull boy and that he always tried to give larnin' the whole road whenever he saw it comin', and it kinder surprised her to have him stand at the head of his class all the time and make better recitations than smarter boys who worked hard. But he always knew everything and never missed a question. He and Amos were great friends, more because Amos felt sorry for him, I guess, than anything else. Billy used to stand up and shine every day, when she knew mighty well he was the slowest chap in the whole school and hadn't studied his lessons neither. Well, one day Amos got hove about twenty feet by a colt he was tryin' to ride and he stayed in bed a few weeks. Durin' that time Billy Hines couldn't answer a question. Not a question. He and arithmetic were strangers. Also geography,

history, and everything else that he'd been intimate with. He jest stopped shinin', like a candle with a stopper on it. The amount of it was she found that Amos had always told him ahead the questions he was goin' to be asked, and Billy learned the answers just before he stood up to recite."

"Why, how did Amos—how did Mr. Judd know what questions would be asked?"

"I guess 't was just a series of coincidences that happened to last all winter."

Molly laughed. "How unforgiving you are, Mr. White! But did Amos Judd explain it?"

"He did n't. He was too young then to do it to anybody's satisfaction, and now that he 's older he won't."

"Why not?"

"Well, he 's kind of sensitive about it. Never talks of those things, and don't like to have other folks."

Molly stood looking over toward the Judd

house, wondering how much of the Deacon's tale was truth, and how much was village gossip exaggerated by repetition.

"Did you ever hear about Josiah's death?"

Molly shook her head.

"'T was to him that Amos was fetched from India. One mornin' Josiah and I were standin' in the doorway of his barn talkin'. The old barn used to be closer to the house, but Amos tore it down after he built that big new one. Josiah and I stood in the doorway talkin' about a new yoke of oxen; nothin' excitin', for there was n't any cause for it. We stood in the doorway, both facin' out, when Josiah, without givin' any notice, sort of pitched forward and fell face down in the snow. I turned him over and tried to lift him up, but when I saw his face I was scared. Just at that particular minute the doctor, with Amos sittin' in the sleigh beside him, drove into the avenue and hurried along as if he knew there was trouble. We

carried Josiah into the house, but 't wa'n't any use. He was dead before we got him there. It was heart disease. At the funeral I said to the doctor it was lucky he happened along just then, even if he could n't save him, and I found there was no happen about it; that Amos had run to his house just as he was starting off somewheres else, and told him Josiah was dyin' and to get there as fast as he could."

"That's very strange," Molly said, in a low voice. She had listened to this story with a feeling of awe, for she believed the Deacon to be a truthful man, and this was an experience of his own. "This mysterious faculty," she said, "whatever it was, did he realize it fully himself?"

"I guess he did!" and the Deacon chuckled as he went on with his work. "And he used to play tricks with it. I tell you he was a handful."

"Did you say he lost it as he grew up?"

The Deacon turned about and answered, in

a serious tone: "No. But he wants folks to think so. All the same, there's something between Amos and the Almighty that the rest of us ain't into."

One Monday morning, toward the last of June, Molly left Daleford for a two weeks' visit at the seashore. Her absence caused a void that extended from the Cabot household over to the big white mansion at the further end of the maples. This emptiness and desolation drove the young man to frequent visits upon Mr. Cabot, who, in his turn, found a pleasant relief in the companionship of his neighbor, and he had no suspicion of the solace this visitor derived from sitting upon the piazza so lately honored by the absent girl. The eminent lawyer was not aware that he himself, apart from all personal merit, was the object of an ardent affection from his relationship to his own daughter. For the first twenty-four hours the two disconsolates kept in their

own preserves to a reasonable extent, but on Tuesday they took a fishing trip, followed in the evening by a long talk on the Cabot piazza. During this conversation the lawyer realized more fully than ever the courageous ignorance of his neighbor in all matters that had failed to interest him. On the other hand, he was impressed by the young man's clear, comprehensive, and detailed knowledge upon certain unfamiliar subjects. In spite of his college education and a very considerable knowledge of the world he was, mentally, something of a spoiled child; yet from his good sense, originality, and moral courage he was always interesting.

Wednesday, the third day, brought a northeast gale that swept the hills and valleys of Daleford with a drenching rain. Trees, bushes, flowers, and blades of grass dripping with water, bent and quivered before the wind. Mr. Cabot spent the morning among his books

and papers, writing letters and doing some work which the pleasant weather had caused him to defer. For such labors this day seemed especially designed. In the afternoon, about two o'clock, he stood looking out upon the storm from his library window, which was at the corner of the house and commanded the long avenue toward the road. The tempest seemed to rage more viciously than ever. Bounding across the country in sheets of blinding rain, it beat savagely against the glass, then poured in unceasing torrents down the window-panes. The ground was soaked and spongy with tempestuous little puddles in every hollow of the surface. In the distance, under the tossing maples, he espied a figure coming along the driveway in a waterproof and rubber boots. He recognized Amos, his head to one side to keep his hat on, gently trotting before the gale, as the mighty force against his back rendered a certain degree of speed perfunctory.

Mr. Cabot had begun to weary of solitude, and saw with satisfaction that Amos crossed the road and continued along the avenue. Beneath his waterproof was something large and bulging, of which he seemed very careful. With a smiling salutation he splashed by the window toward the side door, laid off his outer coat and wiped his ponderous boots in the hall, then came into the library bearing an enormous bunch of magnificent yellow roses. Mr. Cabot recognized them as coming from a bush in which its owner took the greatest pride, and in a moment their fragrance filled the room.

"What beauties!" he exclaimed. "But are you sure they are for me?"

"If she decides to give them to you, sir."

"She? Who? Bridget or Maggie?"

"Neither. They belong to the lady who is now absent; whose soul is the Flower of Truth, and whose beauty is the Glory of the Morning." Then he added, with a gesture of hu-

mility, "That is, of course, if she will deign to accept them."

"But, my well-meaning young friend, were you gifted with less poetry and more experience you would know that these roses will be faded and decaying memories long before the recipient returns. And you a farmer!"

Amos looked at the clock. "You seem to have precious little confidence in my flowers, sir. They are good for three hours, I think."

"Three hours! Yes, but to-day is Wednesday and it is many times three hours before next Monday afternoon."

A look of such complete surprise came into Amos's face that Mr. Cabot smiled as he asked, "Did n't you know her visit was to last a fortnight?"

The young man made no answer to this, but looked first at his questioner and then at his roses with an air that struck Mr. Cabot at the moment as one of embarrassment. As he

recalled it afterward, however, he gave it a different significance. With his eyes still on the flowers Amos, in a lower voice, said, "Don't you know that she is coming to-day?"

"No. Do you?"

The idea of a secret correspondence between these two was not a pleasant surprise; and the fact that he had been successfully kept in ignorance of an event of such importance irritated him more than he cared to show. He asked, somewhat dryly: "Have you heard from her?"

"No, sir, not a word," and as their eyes met Mr. Cabot felt it was a truthful answer.

"Then why do you think she is coming?"

Amos looked at the clock and then at his watch. "Has no one gone to the station for her?"

"No one," replied Mr. Cabot, as he turned away and seated himself at his desk. "Why should they?"

Then, in a tone which struck its hearer as

being somewhat more melancholy than the situation demanded, the young man replied: "I will explain all this to-morrow, or whenever you wish, Mr. Cabot. It is a long story, but if she does come to-day she will be at the station in about fifty minutes. You know what sort of a vehicle the stage is. May I drive over for her?"

"Certainly, if you wish."

The young man lingered a moment as if there was something more he wished to add, but left the room without saying it. A minute later he was running as fast as the gale would let him along the avenue toward his own house, and in a very short time Mr. Cabot saw a pair of horses with a covered buggy, its leather apron well up in front, come dashing down the avenue from the opposite house. Amid fountains of mud the little horses wheeled into the road, trotted swiftly toward the village and out of sight.

An hour and a half later the same horses,

bespattered and dripping, drew up at the door. Amos got out first, and holding the reins with one hand, assisted Molly with the other. From the expression on the two faces it was evident their cheerfulness was more than a match for the fiercest weather. Mr. Cabot might perhaps have been ashamed to confess it, but his was a state of mind in which this excess of felicity annoyed him. He felt a touch of resentment that another, however youthful and attractive, should have been taken into her confidence, while he was not even notified of her arrival. But she received a hearty welcome, and her impulsive, joyful embrace almost restored him to a normal condition.

A few minutes later they were sitting in the library, she upon his lap recounting the events that caused her unexpected return. Ned Elliott was quite ill when she got there, and last night the doctor pronounced it typhoid fever; that of course upset the whole

house, and she, knowing her room was needed, decided during the night to come home this morning. Such was the substance of the narrative, but told in many words, with every detail that occurred to her, and with frequent ramifications; for the busy lawyer had always made a point of taking a very serious interest in whatever his only child saw fit to tell him. And this had resulted in an intimacy and a reliance upon each other which was very dear to both. As Molly was telling her story Maggie came in from the kitchen and handed her father a telegram, saying Joe had just brought it from the post-office. Mr. Cabot felt for his glasses and then remembered they were over on his desk. So Molly tore it open and read the message aloud.

HON. JAMES CABOT, DALEFORD, CONN.

I leave for home this afternoon by the one-forty train.

MARY CABOT.

"Why, papa, it is my telegram! How slow it has been!"

"When did you send it?"

"I gave it to Sam Elliott about nine o'clock this morning, and it would n't be like him to forget it."

"No, and probably he did not forget it. It only waited at the Bingham station a few hours to get its breath before starting on a six-mile walk."

But he was glad to know she had sent the message. Suddenly she wheeled about on his knee and inserted her fingers between his collar and his neck, an old trick of her childhood and still employed when the closest attention was required. "But how did you know I was coming?"

"I did not."

"But you sent for me."

"No, Amos went for you of his own accord."

"Well, how did he know I was coming?"

Mr. Cabot raised his eyebrows. "I have no idea, unless you sent him word."

"Of course I did n't send him word. What an idea! Why don't you tell me how you knew?" and the honest eyes were fixed upon his own in stern disapproval. He smiled and said it was evidently a mysterious case; that she must cross-examine the prophet. He then told her of the roses and of his interview with Amos. She was mystified, and also a little excited as she recalled the stories of Deacon White, but knowing her father would only laugh at them, contented herself with exacting the promise of an immediate explanation from Mr. Judd.

V

EARLY in the evening the young man appeared. He found Mr. Cabot and Molly sitting before a cheerful fire, an agreeable contrast to the howling elements without. She thanked him for the roses, expressing her admiration for their uncommon beauty.

With a grave salutation he answered, "I told them, one morning, when they were little buds, that if they surpassed all previous roses there was a chance of being accepted by the Dispenser of Sunshine who dwells across the way; and this is the result of their efforts."

"The results are superb, and I am grateful."

"There is no question of their beauty," said Mr. Cabot, "and they appear to possess a knowledge of coming events that must be of value at times."

"It was not from the roses I got my infor-

mation, sir. But I will tell you about that now, if you wish."

"Well, take a cigar and clear up the mystery."

It seemed a winter's evening, as the three sat before the fire, the older man in the centre, the younger people on either side, facing each other. Mr. Cabot crossed his legs, and laying his magazine face downward upon his lap, said, "I confess I shall be glad to have the puzzle solved, as it is a little deep for me except on the theory that you are skilful liars. Molly I know to be unpractised in that art, but as for you, Amos, I can only guess what you may conceal under a truthful exterior."

Amos smiled. "It is something to look honest, and I am glad you can say even that." Then, after a pause, he leaned back in his chair and, in a voice at first a little constrained, thus began:

"As long ago as I can remember I used to

imagine things that were to happen, all sorts of scenes and events that might possibly occur, as most children do, I suppose. But these scenes, or imaginings, were of two kinds: those that required a little effort of my own, and another kind that came with no effort whatever. These last were the most usual, and were sometimes of use as they always came true. That is, they never failed to occur just as I had seen them. While a child this did not surprise me, as I supposed all the rest of the world were just like myself."

At this point Amos looked over toward Molly and added, with a faint smile, "I know just what your father is thinking. He is regretting that an otherwise healthy young man should develop such lamentable symptoms."

"Not at all," said Mr. Cabot. "It is very interesting. Go on."

She felt annoyed by her father's calmness. Here was the most extraordinary, the most

marvellous thing she had ever encountered, and yet he behaved as if it were a commonplace experience of every-day life. And he must know that Amos was telling the truth! But Amos himself showed no signs of annoyance.

"As I grew older and discovered gradually that none of my friends had this faculty, and that people looked upon it as something uncanny and supernatural, I learned to keep it to myself. I became almost ashamed of the peculiarity and tried by disuse to outgrow it, but such a power is too useful a thing to ignore altogether, and there are times when the temptation is hard to resist. That was the case this afternoon. I expected a friend who was to telegraph me if unable to come, and at half-past two no message had arrived: but being familiar with the customs of the Daleford office I knew there might be a dozen telegrams and I get none the wiser. So, not wishing to drive twelve

miles for nothing in such a storm, I yielded to the old temptation and put myself ahead — in spirit of course — and saw the train as it arrived. You can imagine my surprise when the first person to get off was Miss Molly Cabot."

Her eyes were glowing with excitement. Repressing an exclamation of wonder, she turned toward her father and was astonished, and gently indignant, to find him in the placid enjoyment of his cigar, showing no surprise. Then she asked of Amos, almost in a whisper, for her throat seemed very dry, "What time was it when you saw this?"

"About half-past two."

"And the train got in at four."

"Yes, about four."

"You saw what occurred on the platform as if you were there in person?" Mr. Cabot inquired.

"Yes, sir. The conductor helped her out and

she started to run into the station to get out of the rain."

"Yes, yes!" from Molly.

"But the wind twisted you about and blew you against him. And you both stuck there for a second."

She laughed nervously: "Yes, that is just what happened!"

"But I am surprised, Amos," put in Mr. Cabot, "that you should have had so little sympathy for a tempest-tossed lady as to fail to observe there was no carriage."

"I took it for granted you had sent for her."

"But you saw there was none at the station."

"There might have been several and I not see them."

"Then your vision was limited to a certain spot?"

"Yes, sir, in a way, for I could only see as if

I were there in person, and I did not move around to the other side of the station."

"Didn't you take notice as you approached?"

Amos drew a hand up the back of his head and hesitated before answering. "I closed my eyes at home with a wish to be at the station as the train came in, and I found myself there without approaching it from any particular direction."

"And if you had looked down the road," Mr. Cabot continued, after a pause, "you would have seen yourself approaching in a buggy?"

"Yes, probably."

"And from the buggy you might almost have seen what you have just described." This was said so calmly and pleasantly that Molly, for an instant, did not catch its full meaning; then her eyes, in disappointment, turned to Amos. She thought there was a flush on the dark face, and something resembling anger as

the eyes turned toward her father. But Mr. Cabot was watching the smoke as it curled from his lips. After a very short pause Amos said, quietly, "It had not occurred to me that my statement could place me in such an unfortunate position."

"Not at all unfortunate," and Mr. Cabot raised a hand in protest. "I know you too well, Amos, to doubt your sincerity. The worst I can possibly believe is that you yourself are misled: that you are perhaps attaching a false significance to a series of events that might be explained in another way."

Amos arose and stood facing them with his back against the mantel. "You are much too clever for me, Mr. Cabot. I hardly thought you could accept this explanation, but I have told you nothing but the truth."

"My dear boy, do not think for a moment that I doubt your honesty. Older men than you, and harder-headed ones, have digested

more incredible things. In telling your story you ask me to believe what I consider impossible. There is no well-authenticated case on record of such a faculty. It would interfere with the workings of nature. Future events could not arrange themselves with any confidence in your vicinity, and all history that is to come, and even the elements, would be compelled to adjust themselves according to your predictions."

"But, papa, you yourself had positive evidence that he knew of my coming two hours before I came. How do you explain that?"

"I do not pretend to explain it, and I will not infuriate Amos by calling it a good guess, or a startling coincidence."

Amos smiled. "Oh, call it what you please, Mr. Cabot. But it seems to me that the fact of these things invariably coming true ought to count for something, even with the legal mind."

"You say there has never been a single case in which your prophecy has failed?"

"Not one."

"Suppose, just for illustration, that you should look ahead and see yourself in church next Sunday standing on your head in the aisle, and suppose you had a serious unwillingness to perform the act. Would you still go to church and do it?"

"I should go to church and do it."

"Out of respect for the prophecy?"

"No, because I could not prevent it."

"Have you often resisted?"

"Not very often, but enough to learn the lesson."

"And you have always fulfilled the prophecy?"

"Always."

There was a short silence during which Molly kept her eyes on her work, while Amos stood silently beside the fire as if there was

nothing more to be said. Finally Mr. Cabot knocked the ashes from his cigar and asked, with his pleasantest smile, "Do you think if one of these scenes involved the actions of another person than yourself, that person would also carry it out?"

"I think so."

"That if you told me, for instance, of something I should do to-morrow at twelve o'clock, I should do it?"

"I think so."

"Well, what am I going to do to-morrow at noon, as the clock strikes twelve?"

"Give me five minutes," and with closed eyes and head slightly inclined, the young man remained leaning against the mantel without changing his position. It seemed a long five minutes. Outside, the tempest beat viciously against the windows, then with mocking shrieks whirled away into the night. To Molly's excited fancy the echoing chimney


A. J. Keller

was alive with the mutterings of unearthly voices. Although in her father's judgment she placed a perfect trust, there still remained a lingering faith in this supernatural power, whatever it was; but she knew it to be a faith her reason might not support. As for Amos, he was certainly an interesting figure as he stood before them, and nothing could be easier at such a moment than for an imaginative girl to invest him with mystic attributes. Although outwardly American so far as raiment, the cut of his hair, and his own efforts could produce that impression, he remained, nevertheless, distinctly Oriental. The dark skin, the long, black, clearly marked eyebrows, the singular beauty of his features, almost feminine in their refinement, betrayed a race whose origin and traditions were far removed from his present surroundings. She was struck by the little scar upon his forehead, which seemed, of a sudden, to glow and be alive, as if catching some re-

flection from the firelight. While her eyes were upon it, the fire blazed up in a dying effort, and went out; but the little scar remained a luminous spot with a faint light of its own. She drew her hand across her brow to brush away the illusion, and as she again looked toward him he opened his eyes and raised his head. Then he said to her father, slowly, as if from a desire to make no mistake:

"To-morrow you will be standing in front of the Unitarian Church, looking up at the clock on the steeple as it strikes twelve. Then you will walk along by the Common until you are opposite Caleb Farnum's, cross the street, and knock at his door. Mrs. Farnum will open it. She will show you into the parlor, the room on the right, where you will sit down in a rocking-chair and wait. I left you there, but can tell you the rest if you choose to give the time."

Molly glanced at her father and was surprised by his expression. Bending forward, his

eyes fixed upon Amos with a look of the deepest interest, he made no effort to conceal his astonishment. He leaned back in the chair, however, and resuming his old attitude, said, quietly:

"That is precisely what I intended to do tomorrow, and at twelve o'clock, as I knew he would be at home for his dinner. Is it possible that a wholesome, out-of-doors young chap like you can be something of a mind-reader and not know it?"

"No, sir. I have no such talent."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely sure. It happens that you already intended to do the thing mentioned, but that was merely a coincidence."

For a moment or two there was a silence, during which Mr. Cabot seemed more interested in the appearance of his cigar than in the previous conversation. At last he said:

"I understand you to say these scenes, or

prophecies, or whatever you call them, have never failed of coming true. Now, if I wilfully refrain from calling on Mr. Farnum to-morrow it will have a tendency to prove, will it not, that your system is fallible?"

"I suppose so."

"And if you can catch it in several such errors you might in time lose confidence in it?"

"Very likely, but I think it will never happen. At least, not in such a way."

"Just leave that to me," and Mr. Cabot rose from his seat and stood beside him in front of the fire. "The only mystery, in my opinion, is a vivid imagination that sometimes gets the better of your facts; or rather combines with your facts and gets the better of yourself. These visions, however real, are such as come not only to hosts of children, but to many older people who are highstrung and imaginative. As for the prophetic faculty, don't let

that worry you. It is a bump that has not sprouted yet on your head, or on any other. Daniel and Elijah are the only experts of permanent standing in that line, and even their reputations are not what they used to be."

Amos smiled and said something about not pretending to compete with professionals, and the conversation turned to other matters. After his departure, as they went upstairs, Molly lingered in her father's chamber a moment and asked if he really thought Mr. Judd had seen from his buggy the little incident at the station which he thought had appeared to him in his vision.

"It seems safe to suppose so," he answered. "And he could easily be misled by a little sequence of facts, fancies, and coincidences that happened to form a harmonious whole."

"But in other matters he seems so sensible, and he certainly is not easily deceived."

"Yes, I know, but those are often the very

people who become the readiest victims. Now Amos, with all his practical common-sense, I know to be unusually romantic and imaginative. He loves the mystic and the fabulous. The other day while we were fishing together — thank you, Maggie does love a fresh place for my slippers every night — the other day I discovered, from several things he said, that he was an out-and-out fatalist. But I think we can weaken his faith in all that. He is too young and healthy and has too free a mind to remain a permanent dupe."

VI

THE next morning was clear and bright. Mr. Cabot, absorbed in his work, spent nearly the whole forenoon among his papers, and when he saw Molly in her little cart drive up to the door with a seamstress from the village, he knew the day was getting on. Seeing him still at his desk as she entered, she bent over him and put a hand before his eyes. "Oh, crazy man! You have no idea what a day it is, and to waste it over an ink-pot! Why, it is half-past eleven, and I believe you have been here ever since I left. Stop that work this minute and go out of doors." A cool cheek was laid against his face and the pen removed from his fingers. "Now mind."

"Well, you are right. Let us both take a walk."

"I wish I could, but I *must* start Mrs. Turner on her sewing. Please go yourself. It is a heavenly day."

As he stepped off the piazza a few minutes later, she called out from her chamber window, "Which way are you going, papa?"

"To the village, and I will get the mail."

"Be sure and not go to Mr. Farnum's."

"I promise," and with a smile he walked away. Her enthusiasm over the quality of the day he found was not misplaced. The pure, fresh air brought a new life. Gigantic snowy clouds, like the floating mountains of fairy land, moved majestically across the heavens, and the distant hills stood clear and sharp against the dazzling blue. The road was muddy, but that was a detail to a lover of nature, and Mr. Cabot, as he strode rapidly toward the village, experienced an elasticity and exhilaration that recalled his younger days. He felt more like dancing or climbing trees than plodding sedately along a turnpike. With a quick, youthful step he ascended the gentle incline that led to the Common, and if a stranger had

been called upon to guess at the gentleman's age as he walked jauntily into the village with head erect, swinging his cane, he would more likely have said thirty years than sixty. And if the stranger had watched him for another three minutes he would have modified his guess, and not only have given him credit for his full age, but might have suspected either an excessive fatigue or a mild intemperance. For Mr. Cabot, during his short walk through Daleford Village, experienced a series of sensations so novel and so crushing that he never, in his inner self, recovered completely from the shock.

Instead of keeping along the sidewalk to the right and going to the post-office according to his custom, he crossed the muddy road and took the gravel walk that skirted the Common. It seemed a natural course, and he failed to realize, until he had done it, that he was going out of his way. Now he must cross

the road again when opposite the store. When opposite the store, however, instead of crossing over he kept along as he had started. Then he stopped, as if to turn, but his hesitation was for a second only. Again he went ahead, along the same path, by the side of the Common. It was then that Mr. Cabot felt a mild but unpleasant thrill creep upward along his spine and through his hair. This was caused by a startling suspicion that his movements were not in obedience to his own will. A moment later it became a conviction. This consciousness brought the cold sweat to his brow, but he was too strong a man, too clear-headed and determined, to lose his bearings without a struggle or without a definite reason. With all the force of his nature he stopped once more to decide it, then and there: and again he started forward. An indefinable, all-pervading force, gentle but immeasurably stronger than himself, was exerting an intangible pressure,

and never in his recollection had he felt so powerless, so weak, so completely at the mercy of something that was no part of himself; yet, while amazed and impressed beyond his own belief, he suffered no obscurity of intellect. The first surprise over, he was more puzzled than terrified, more irritated than resigned.

For nearly a hundred yards he walked on, impelled by he knew not what; then, with deliberate resolution, he stopped, clutched the wooden railing at his side, and held it with an iron grip. As he did so, the clock in the belfry of the Unitarian Church across the road began striking twelve. He raised his eyes, and, recalling the prophecy of Amos, he bit his lip, and his head reeled as in a dream. "To-morrow, as the clock strikes twelve, you will be standing in front of the Unitarian Church, looking up at it." Each stroke of the bell—and no bell ever sounded so loud—vibrated through every nerve of his being. It was harsh,

exultant, almost threatening, and his brain in a numb, dull way seemed to quiver beneath the blows. Yet, up there, about the white belfry, pigeons strutted along the moulding, cooing, quarrelsome, and important, like any other pigeons. And the sunlight was even brighter than usual; the sky bluer and more dazzling. The tall spire, from the moving clouds behind it, seemed like a huge ship, sailing forward and upward as if he and it were floating to a different world.

Still holding fast to the fence, he drew the other hand sharply across his eyes to rally his wavering senses. The big elms towered serenely above him, their leaves rustling like a countless chorus in the summer breeze. Opposite, the row of old-fashioned New England houses stood calmly in their places, self-possessed, with no signs of agitation. The world, to their knowledge, had undergone no sudden changes within the last five minutes. It must

have been a delusion: a little collapse of his nerves, perhaps. So many things can affect the brain: any doctor could easily explain it. He would rest a minute, then return.

As he made this resolve his left hand, like a treacherous servant, quietly relaxed its hold and he started off, not toward his home, but forward, continuing his journey. He now realized that the force which impelled him, although gentle and seemingly not hostile in purpose, was so much stronger than himself that resistance was useless. During the next three minutes, as he walked mechanically along the sidewalk by the Common, his brain was nervously active in an effort to arrive at some solution of this erratic business; some sensible solution that was based either on science or on common-sense. But that solace was denied him. The more he thought the less he knew. No previous experience of his own, and no authenticated experience of anyone else, at least of

which he had ever heard, could he summon to assist him. When opposite the house of Silas Farnum he turned and left the sidewalk, and noticed, with an irresponsible interest as he crossed the road, that with no care of his own he avoided the puddles and selected for his feet the drier places. This was another surprise, for he took no thought of his steps; and the discovery added to the overwhelming sense of helplessness that was taking possession of him. With no volition of his own he also avoided the wet grass between the road and the gravel walk. He next found himself in front of Silas Farnum's gate and his hand reached forth to open it. It was another mild surprise when this hand, like a conscious thing, tried the wrong side of the little gate, then felt about for the latch. The legs over which he had ceased to have direction, carried him along the narrow brick walk, and one of them lifted him upon the granite doorstep.

Once more he resolved, calmly and with a serious determination, that this humiliating comedy should go no farther. He would turn about and go home without entering the house. It would be well for Amos to know that an old lawyer of sixty was composed of different material from the impressionable enthusiast of twenty-seven. While making this resolve the soles of his shoes were drawing themselves across the iron scraper; then he saw his hand rise slowly toward the old-fashioned knocker and, with three taps, announce his presence. A huge fly dozing on the knocker flew off and lit again upon the panel of the door. As it readjusted its wings and drew a pair of front legs over the top of its head Mr. Cabot wondered, if at the creation of the world, it was fore-ordained that this insect should occupy that identical spot at a specified moment of a certain day, and execute this trivial performance. If so, what a rôle

humanity was playing! The door opened and Mrs. Farnum, with a smiling face, stood before him.

"How do you do, Mr. Cabot? Won't you step in?"

As he opened his lips to decline, he entered the little hallway, was shown into the parlor and sat in a horse-hair rocking-chair, in which he waited for Mrs. Farnum to call her husband. When the husband came Mr. Cabot stated his business and found that he was once more dependent upon his own volition. He could rise, walk to the window, say what he wished, and sit down again when he desired.

Upon reaching home he went directly to his chamber, and was glad to enter it without meeting his daughter. His reflection in the mirror surprised him, as he expected to find a face thirty years older than when it started for the village. But there were no outward

traces of the recent struggle. It was the same face, calm, firm, and as self-reliant as ever. This was reassuring and did much toward a return of confidence. He threw himself upon the bed, and as he lay there he heard through the open window the voices of Molly and Amos in the old-fashioned garden. They seemed very jolly and happy, and Molly's laughter came like music to his ears; but her companion, although amusing and full of fun, seemed to do none of the laughing; and then it came upon him that in all his intercourse with Amos he had never heard him laugh. Ever ready to smile, and often irresistible in his high spirits, yet he never laughed aloud. And the deep melancholy of his face when in repose — was that a result of fulfilling prophecies? Were there solemn secrets behind that boyish face?

The perfume of the flowers stole in through the closed blinds, and he could hear the buzzing of a bee outside the window, mingling

with the voices in the garden. These voices became lower, the subject of conversation having changed — perhaps to something more serious — and Mr. Cabot took a nap.

VII

"DID you go to Silas Farnum's?" was Molly's first question, and her father confessed having done precisely as Amos had predicted; but while giving a truthful account of his experience, he told the story in a half-jesting manner, attributing his compulsory visit to some hypnotic influence, and to a temporary irresponsibility of his own. His daughter, however, was not deceived. Her belief in a supernatural agency renewed its strength.

As for her father, he had never been more at sea in the solution of a problem. In his own mind the only explanation was by the dominance of another mind over his own, by a force presumably mesmeric. The fact that Amos himself was also a victim rendered that theory difficult to accept, unless both were dupes of some third person. If at the time of his visit to Silas Farnum he had been ill, or weak, or in a

nervous condition, or had it occurred at night when the imagination might get the better of one's judgment, there would have been the possibility of an explanation on physical grounds. But that he, James Cabot, of good health and strength, should, in the sunlight of a summer noon, be the powerless victim of such an influence, was a theory so mortifying and preposterous as to upset his usual processes of reason.

It was not until the next afternoon that an opportunity was given for a word with Amos. Out on the grass, beneath a huge elm at the easterly corner of the house, Mr. Cabot, in a bamboo chair, was reclining with his paper, when he noticed his young friend cantering briskly along the road on a chestnut horse. Amos saw him, turned his animal toward the low stone wall that separated the Cabots' field from the highway, cleared it with an easy jump and came cantering over the grass.

"Is that old Betty? I did n't know she was a jumper."

"Oh, yes. She has a record." Dismounting, he faced her about and, with a tap on the flank, told her to go home. She returned, however, and showed a desire to rub noses with him. "Well, have your way, old lady," and leaving her to a feast of clover he threw himself on the ground at Mr. Cabot's feet.

"You are a kind man to your animals, Amos, although you may be somewhat offensive as a prophet."

"So you went, after all?"

"Went where?"

"To see Silas Farnum."

"Did I say that?"

Amos looked up with a smile that could have a dozen meanings. His wily companion, from a sense of professional caution, wished to feel his way before committing himself.

"You think I went, after all?"

"Yes, sir, I know you did, from my own experience."

"Which is that the events inevitably occur as foreseen?"

"Always."

"Well, I will make a clean breast of it and tell you just what happened."

"I know it already, Mr. Cabot, as well as if you had told me."

"Do you know of my resolve not to do it? Of my ineffectual resistance and the sensations I experienced?"

"I think so. I have been through it all myself."

For a minute or two neither spoke. Amos, resting upon an elbow, his cheek against the palm of one hand, was, with the other, deceiving a very small caterpillar into useless marches from one end of a blade of grass to the other. Mr. Cabot, in a more serious tone, continued: "Can you tell me, Amos, on your

honor, that as far as you know there was no attempt on your part, or on the part of any other person, to influence me upon that occasion?"

Amos tossed aside the blade of grass and sat up. "I give you my word, sir, that so far as I know there is nothing in it of that nature. I am just as helpless as you when it comes to any attempt at resistance."

"Then how do you account for it?"

Amos had plucked a longer blade of grass, and was winding it about his fingers. "My explanation may seem childish to you, but I have no better one to offer. It is simply that certain events are destined to occur at appointed times, and that my knowing it in advance is not allowed to interfere with the natural order of things."

"The evidence may seem to point that way, judging from my own experience, but can you believe that the whole human race are carrying out such a cut-and-dried scheme? Accord-

ing to that theory we are merely mechanical dummies, irresponsible and helpless, like cogs in a wheel."

"No, sir, we are at liberty to do just as we please. It was your own idea going to Silas Farnum's. That you happened to be told of it in advance created an artificial condition, otherwise you would have gone there in peace and happiness. In other words, it was ordained that you should desire to do that thing, and you were to do as you desired."

The lawyer remained silent a moment, his face giving no indication either of belief or denial.

"Have you never been able to prevent or even modify the fulfilment of an act after having seen it in advance?"

"No, sir; never."

"Then these scenes as presented to you are invariably correct, without the slightest change?"

"Yes."

Mr. Cabot looked down at his friend with a feeling that was not without a touch of awe. Of the young man's honesty he had not the slightest doubt, and his own recent experience seemed but one more proof of the correctness of his facts. He looked with a curious interest upon this mysterious yet simple Oriental squatting idly on the grass, his straw hat tilted back on his head, the dark face bent forward, as with careful fingers he gathered a bunch of clover.

"If this faculty never fails you your knowledge of future events is simply without limit. You can tell about the weather, the crops, the stock market, the result of wars, marriages, births, and deaths, and who the next president is to be."

"Yes, sir," he answered quietly, without looking up.

Mr. Cabot straightened up in his chair and rubbed his chin. His credulity had reached its

limit, yet, if he could judge by the evidence already presented, the young man was adhering strictly to the truth. There followed a silence during which Betty, who in nibbling about had approached within a few feet of them, held out her head, and took the clover from Amos. Mr. Cabot brought a pencil and piece of paper from his pockets. "I would like to try one more experiment, with your permission. Will you write on that paper what I am to do at — well, say ten o'clock to-night?"

Amos took the paper and closed his eyes, but in a moment looked up and said, "You are in the dark and I can see nothing."

"Then you have no knowledge of what goes on in the dark?"

"No, sir; only of things that I can see. If there is any light at all I can see as if I were there in person, but no better. To-night at ten o'clock you are in your own chamber, and it is absolutely black."

"Then change the hour to six o'clock."

As Mr. Cabot, a moment later, turned a sidelong glance toward his friend, sitting with closed eyes before him, he thought the little mark upon his forehead had never been so distinct. He regarded it with a mild surprise as it seemed almost aglow; but the sky was becoming rosy in the west, and there might be a reflection from the setting sun. Amos wrote something on a slip of paper, folded it up and returned it to Mr. Cabot, who carefully tucked it away in a pocket saying, "I shall not read it until six-thirty. I will tell you to-morrow if you are correct."

"Oh, that is correct, sir! You need have no anxiety on that point."

As he spoke there passed slowly along the road a cart containing two men, and behind the cart, securely fastened, walked a heavy, vicious-looking bull.

"That is an ugly brute," he said.

"So I was just thinking. Does he belong in the town?"

"Yes; it is Barnard's bull. Yesterday he got loose and so mutilated a horse that it had to be shot; and within an hour he tried his best to kill old Barnard himself, which was a good undertaking and showed public spirit. He is sure to have a victim sooner or later, and it certainly ought to be old Barnard if anybody."

"Who is Barnard?"

"He is the oyster-eyed, malignant old liar and skinflint who lives in that red house about a mile below here."

"You seem to like him."

"I hate him."

"What has he done to you?"

"Nothing; but he bullies his wife, starves his cattle, and cheats his neighbors. Even as a small boy I knew enough to dislike him, and whenever he went by the house I used to stone him."

"What a pleasant little neighbor you must have been!"

Amos tried to smile, but his anger was evidently too serious a matter to be treated with disrespect. Mr. Cabot, after regarding for a moment the wrathful eyes that still followed the bull, continued:

"You are more than half barbarian, my warlike farmer. Must you do physical damage to everyone you dislike?"

"No, sir; but as a rule I should like to. As for loving your enemies — count me out. I love my friends. The man who pretends to love his enemies is either a hypocrite or a poor hater."

The older man smiled at the earnestness with which this sentence was uttered. "I am afraid, Mr. Amos Judd, you are not a Christian. Take my advice and join a bible-class before the devil gets his other hand upon you."

After a few words on other matters, Amos called his mare, and departed.

As the hour of six drew near, Mr. Cabot made a point of realizing that he was a free agent and could do whatever he wished, and he resolved that no guess, based on a probability, should prove correct. To assure himself that there was no compulsion or outside influence of any nature, he started first for the barn to execute a fantastic resolve, then as an additional proof that he was absolutely his own master, suddenly changed his mind, turned about, and went upstairs.

Going along a back passage with no definite intention, he paused at a half-open door, looked in, and entered. The blinds were closed, but between the slats came bars of light from the western sun, illumining the little room, an unused chamber, now serving as a storehouse for such trunks and sundry relics as had failed to reach the attic. Mr. Cabot noticed a rocking-

horse in one corner and his eyes sparkled with a new idea. After closing the door he dragged the steed from its resting-place, planted it in the middle of the floor, and looked at his watch. It lacked four minutes of six. As he prepared to mount he saw the legs of a rag-baby projecting over a shelf, and pulling her down, could not restrain a smile as he held her in his arms. A large, round, flat, and very pale but dirty face was emphasized by fiery cheeks, whose color, from a want of harmony with the coarse material of her visage, had only lingered in erratic blotches. With this lady in his arms he mounted the horse, and, while gently rocking with both feet on the ground, he again took out his watch and found he was just on the minute of six o'clock. But he kept his seat for a moment longer, judging the situation too good to be trifled with, and too unusual for any ordinary guess. Carelessly he rocked a little faster, when a front foot of his overladen

steed slipped from its rocker and Mr. Cabot nearly lost his balance. The damage, however, he easily repaired; the rag-baby was replaced upon her shelf, and when he left the little room and returned to his own chamber there was an expression upon his face that seemed indicative of an amiable triumph. Some minutes later, with a similar expression, he took from his pocket the slip of paper on which Amos had written, read it once with some haste, then a second time and more carefully.

The Hon. James Cabot, one of the most respected residents of Daleford, attempted at six o'clock to elope with an obscure maiden of the village. But his horse, an animal with one glass eye and no tail, broke down before they had fairly started and went lame in his off front foot.

For several minutes he stood looking down at the paper between his fingers, occasionally drawing a hand across his forehead. Then he



refolded the paper and placing it in his pocket, took his hat and went out into the orchard, to think, and to be alone.

On questioning Amos he found no more light was to be expected from that quarter, as the young man had already expounded his only theory, which was that these visions were but optional warnings of the inevitable: that all was fore-ordained: that there could be no variations in the course of Fate. His mind was not philosophical; his processes of reason were simple and direct, and he listened with profound interest to Mr. Cabot's deeper and more scientific attempts at reaching a consistent explanation. Little progress, however, was made in this direction, and the lawyer admitted that the evidence, so far, contradicted in no detail his friend's belief. He also found that Amos, although deeply concerned in the subject when once opened, rarely introduced it himself or referred to it in any way; and that he never

employed his power except in the rarest emergencies.

Moreover, the lawyer understood how such a faculty, although of value in certain cases, would, in the great majority, be worse than useless, while it could not fail of an overpowering influence on the being who employed it. He respected the strength of purpose that enabled the young man to keep it in the background, and he felt that he had discovered at least one reason for the restless pleasures of his youth. Now, happily, he was securing a calmer and a healthier diversion from a life in the open air. As his neighbor became the object of a deeper study it was evident the conflicting qualities that seemed to give such varying colors to his character were the result of these extraordinary conditions. His occasional recklessness and indifference were now easily explained. His disregard for religious observances was in perfect harmony with an insight

into the workings of a stupendous fate, immeasurably above the burning of candles and the laws of ecclesiastical etiquette. His love of exercise, of sunshine, of every form of pleasure and excitement, were but the means of escape from the pursuing dread of an awful knowledge. And the lavish generosity that often startled his friends and bewildered Daleford was a trivial matter to one who, if he cared to peruse in advance the bulletins of the stock exchange, could double his fortune in a day.

Off and on through July and a part of August an unwonted animation prevailed at the Cabots', extending at times along the maples to the other house. Certain visitors of Molly's were the cause of this gayety, and in their entertainment she found Amos a helpful friend. His horses, his fields, his groves, his fruits, his flowers, and himself, were all at her disposal, absolutely and at any time. A few friends of his own coming at the same period proved a

welcome reinforcement, and the leaves of the old maples rustled with a new surprise at the life and laughter, the movement, the color, and the music that enlivened their restful shades. And also at night, during the warm evenings when farmers were abed, the air was awake with melodies which floated off in the summer air, dying away among the voices of the frogs and turtles along the borders of the meadow.

One warm afternoon in August, when there were visitors at neither house, Amos and Molly climbed over a wall into a pasture, for a shorter cut toward home. The pasture was extensive, and their course lay diagonally across a long hill, beyond whose brow they could see nothing. A crimson sunshade and white dress were in dazzling contrast to the dull greens of the pasture, whose prevailing colors were from rocks and withered grass. Patches of wild bushes where the huckleberries were in over-

whelming majority necessitated either wide detours or careful navigating among thorns and briars. Her companion seemed indifferent to the painful fact that knickerbockers are no protection against these enemies. But pricks in the leg at the present moment were too trivial for notice. He was speaking with unusual earnestness, keeping close at her side, and now and then looking anxiously into her face. It may have been the heat and the exercise that drove the color to her cheeks, and there were also signs of annoyance as if she desired to escape him; but the ground was uneven, and the stones and bushes rendered haste impossible. She also appeared tired, and when they stopped at intervals always turned away her face, until finally, when half across the field, she sank upon a rock. "I really must rest. I am dreadfully warm."

He stood beside her, facing in the same direction, both looking over the peaceful val-

ley from which an occasional cow-bell was the only sound.

"It is really a little unfair that my old record should come between us. I was only twenty then, with no end of money and no parents or guardian to look after me. Mr. Judd would let me do whatever I wished, and of course I sailed ahead and did everything. Instead of having an allowance like other fellows I just asked for what I wanted, and always got it. And that is death to a boy."

He pulled a twig from a bush and began to bite the end of it. If at that instant he had glanced down at the face beside him, he might have detected an expression that was not unjustly severe. There was a distinct ray of sympathy in the eyes that were fixed thoughtfully upon the valley.

"And then all the girls met me more than half-way, as if they, too, had conspired against me."

This was said in a half-resentful, half-plaintive tone, and so delightfully free from any boastfulness that Molly, to conceal something very near a smile, bent her head and picked nettles from her skirt.

"Of course I liked a good time, there is no denying that, and I struck the wrong gang at college. I suppose I was weak—everlastingly and disgustingly weak; but really you might make allowances, and anyway—"

He stopped abruptly and turned about. Looking up she saw an expression in his eyes, as they gazed at something behind her, that caused her to spring to her feet and also turn about. As she did so the color left her face and her knees gave way beneath her. Instinctively she clutched his arm. Within twenty yards of them stood Barnard's bull, and in his broad black head and cruel horns, in the distended nostrils and bloodshot eye, she read the fury of an unreasoning brute; and with it her own

death and mutilation. Helpless they stood in the open pasture with no tree or refuge near. Amos cast a swift glance to the right, to the left, and behind them. The bull lowered his head just a very little, and as he stepped slowly forward she could hear his breath in impatient puffs. Her brain began to swim and she closed her eyes, but a sharp word and a rough shake brought her back with a start.

"Do just as I tell you. Turn and walk slowly off to the wall at the right. Then climb over. Don't run till I say so. Give me your parasol."

He twisted her about and gave her a push.

"Don't look around."

Gasping, faint, and so weak from terror that she could hardly direct her steps, she did as she was told. In her dazed mind there was no conception of time or distance, but, a moment after, hearing a snort from the bull and the quick pounding of his feet, she stopped and turned. She expected to see Amos on the crea-

ture's horns, but Amos was running in the other direction, so far safe, although scarcely his own length ahead. In an instant she saw to her horror that, although a nimble runner, he was losing distance with every spring of the bull. But with a presence of mind that did much toward renewing her own courage, he kept looking over his shoulder, and when further running was hopeless, he jumped swiftly to one side, the side up the hill, and the ponderous brute plunged on for several feet before he could come to a stop. Amos looked at once in her direction, and when he saw her he shook his hand and cried, in an angry voice:

"Run! Run! Your life depends on it!"

There was no time to say more, for the bull had wheeled and was again coming toward him. Molly turned and ran as she never ran before, and never before did so many thoughts flash through her mind. Above all came the torturing regret that she could be of no pos-

sible service to the man who, at that moment perhaps, was giving up his life for hers. Leaping rocks, stumbling over hillocks, tearing through bushes, she finally reached the wall, scrambled up and over as best she could, then, with a throbbing heart and pallid face, looked back into the field.

They were farther up the hill, and Amos had evidently just jumped aside, for again the bull and he were facing each other. The animal was advancing slowly toward him, head down, with an angry lashing of the tail and occasional snorts that drove the blood from the spectator's heart. As Amos retreated slowly, his face to the animal, she saw him look swiftly in her direction, then back at the bull. Faster and faster the animal came toward him, and when finally he bounded forward on a run Amos turned and ran for his life. He was now making for this side of the pasture, but she saw with the keenest anguish that all his elas-

ticity had departed, that he was losing ground much faster than at first. That he should show signs of exhaustion caused her no surprise, for the ground was rough, low briars and bushes concealing rocks of treacherous shapes and varying sizes, and the race was harder for the man than for the bull. The distance between them was being lessened with a rapidity that might end the struggle without a second's warning, and the horns were now within a yard of his heels. Again he jumped to one side, but this time it brought a cry of agony from beyond the wall. His foot slipped, and instead of landing a yard or more from the creature's path, he measured his length upon the ground. The bull lowered his head and plunged savagely upon him. The horns grazed the prostrate body, and the heavy brute, by his own impetus, dashed a dozen yards beyond. Amos raised first his head and shoulders, then climbed to his feet, slowly, like one bewildered

or in pain. He stood cautiously upon his legs as if uncertain of their allegiance, but he still clutched the crimson sunshade. The bull, with fiery nostrils and bloodshot eyes, once more came on, and Amos started for the wall. It was evident to the one spectator that his strength was gone. With every jump of the thing behind him he was losing ground, and the awful end was near, and coming swiftly. She sank against the wall and clutched it, for the sky and pasture were beginning to revolve before her straining eyes. But Amos, instead of coming straight for the wall, bore down the hill. With the hot breath close upon his heels, he opened the crimson sunshade, jumped aside, and thrust it upon the pursuing horns: then without looking back he made a bee-line for the wall. It was skilfully done, and for one precious moment the seeming victor was delayed by goring the infuriating color; but only for a moment. He saw his enemy escaping and

bounded in pursuit. This time, however, he missed him by a dozen feet and saw him vault the barrier into safety. The wall he accepted as a conclusion, but he stood close against it, looking over in sullen anger, frothing, hot-eyed, and out of breath.

Then he witnessed a scene, to him of little interest, but which signified much to another person. He saw the girl, anxious, pale, with disordered hair, eagerly approach the exhausted runner; then, nervously pressing a hand to her cheek, she bent forward and asked a question. The young man, who was leaning against a tree and seemed to have trouble with his breathing, suddenly, with a joyful face, stretched forth his hands, and with even more eagerness than her own, asked in his turn a question, whereupon the color rushed to her face. Looking down, then up at him, then down again, she smiled and muttered something, and he, without waiting for further

words, seized her in his arms, and with one hand holding her chin, kissed her mouth and cheeks, not once but many times. But she pushed away from him, flushed and possibly angry. However, it could not have been a deep-seated or lasting anger, for she created no disturbance when he took one of her hands in both of his and made a little speech. It appeared an interesting discourse, although she looked down and off, and all about, at everything except at him, smiling and changing color all the while. He seemed foolishly happy, and when a moment later he wished to assist in rearranging her hair, he was not depressed because the offer was declined with contempt.

Then the young man took a few steps toward the wall, and stood facing the huge head whose bloodshot eyes were still upon him. As he lifted his hand there was a hitch in the motion, and a spasm of pain drew down a corner of his mouth, but the girl behind him



could not see this. He raised his cap and saluted his adversary.

"I thank you, Bull, for chasing me into Molly Cabot's heart."

Then he turned, and hand in hand, the two people disappeared among the pines.

VIII

ACCORDING to habit, Mr. Cabot composed himself by the library table that evening for an hour's reading before going to bed, but the book was soon lifted from his grasp and Molly seated herself in his lap. Although fingers were inserted between his collar and neck as a warning that the closest attention was expected, there followed a short silence before any words were uttered. Then she told him all: of being face to face with Barnard's bull; of the narrow escape; of how Amos remained alone in the open field, and lastly, she gave the substance of what the rescuer had said to her, and that she had promised to be his wife. But on condition that her father should consent.

He received the news gravely; confessed he was not so very much surprised, although he had hoped it would come a little later. And

she was very happy to find he made no objection to Amos as a son-in-law, and to hear him praise his character and pronounce him an honest, manly fellow. His behavior with the bull was heroic, but did not she think the reward he demanded was exorbitant? Was it not a little greedy to ask as a price for his services the entire value of the rescued property? It certainly was not customary to snatch away the object before placing it in the owner's hands. "But he risked his life to save yours, and for that he shall have anything I own."

The following morning, as she stepped upon the piazza, the doctor's buggy came down the opposite avenue and turned toward the village. Could old Mrs. Judd be ill? or was it one of the servants?

An hour later, as there were still no signs of her bull-fighter she began to feel a slight annoyance. Perhaps after sleeping upon the

events of yesterday his enthusiasm had cooled. Perhaps his exceptionally wide experience in this field had taught him that the most delicate way out of such dilemmas was to give the girl the initiative, and perhaps, now that he was sure she loved him, all the fun had departed. Perhaps, in short, he was now realizing that he had committed himself. Although none of these suspicions took a serious hold there was a biting of the nether lip and a slight flush upon the cheeks as she re-entered the house: and in order that he might not suspect, when he did come, that his delay had caused the slightest feeling, or that anyone had watched for him, she returned to her room. A few moments later a note was brought in which was received with indifference, but which, after Maggie's departure she opened with nervous fingers.

MY GIRL: That bull, God bless him! smashed two of my ribs, the doctor says, but I know better. They were broken by an outward force, a sudden expansion of the heart, and I felt them going when you came into a pair of arms.

Please come over, or I shall fly away, as I feel the sprouting of wings, and there is a cracking among the other ribs.

AMOS.

She went, and although their conversation that morning touched upon ribs and anatomy, it would, if taken as a whole, have been of little value to a scientist. It was distinctly personal. The one sentiment which appeared to have an irresistible fascination for the bull-fighter and his fiancée colored all remarks, and the fact that the dialogue would have caused them the most intense mortification if made public, tended in no degree to lessen their enjoyment. To a middle-aged person who

had never been in love it would have been unendurable.

Later in the day she intercepted the doctor and learned as much as possible of the patient's condition. Two ribs were badly broken, he said; had been pressed inward to a serious extent, but so far there were no indications of internal injuries. Of this, however, he could not at present be absolutely sure, but he thought there was no great cause for alarm. The patient, of course, must keep quiet for a week or two.

Fortunately for Amos there proved to be no injury save the damaged ribs, but three long weeks elapsed before he was allowed to go up and down stairs and move about the house.

The last day of August proved a day of discoveries.

It was bright and warm, yet invigorating, the perfection of terrestrial weather, and Mr. Cabot and Molly, early in the afternoon, were

sitting upon the piazza discussing the date of their departure, Amos occupying his favorite place upon the floor in front of them, his back against a column. When she informed her father that additional trunks or boxes of some kind would be needed, Amos said that such articles were going to waste in the Judd residence, and if she would but step across the way and select a few, it would be a lasting benefit to an overcrowded attic. This offer was accepted and they started off. After climbing the final stairs, which were steep and narrow, Molly seated herself upon an old-fashioned settle, the back of which could be lowered and used as an ironing table. "How I do love this smell of an attic! Is it the sap from the hot pine? And is n't there sage in the air, or summer savory?"

"Both. With a few old love-letters and a touch of dried apples."

"Whatever it is, I love it. The days of my

childhood come galloping back," and with upturned face she closed her eyes and drew a longer breath. He bent silently over and touched her lips.

"What a breach of hospitality!"

"When a visitor insults a host by sleeping in his presence, it is etiquette to awaken her. And when lips with those particular undulations look one pleasantly in the eye and say 'Amos, kiss us,' what do you expect to happen?"

"From you I expect the worst, the most improper thing."

"And you will always get it, O spirit of old-fashioned Roses!"

In opening a window he disturbed an enormous fly, whose buzzing filled every corner of the roof. "To me," he said, "this atmosphere recalls long marches and battles, with splendid victories and awful defeats."

"I don't see why. To me it seems delightfully restful."

From an ancient horse-hair trunk he brought forth a box, and seating himself at her feet, emptied its contents upon the floor.

"This is why," and he arranged in parallel lines the little leaden soldiers, diminutive cannons, some with wheels and some without, and a quantity of dominos, two by two. "These are troops, and if you care to know how I passed the rainy days of boyhood this will show you."

"But, what are the dominos?"

"They are the enemy. These lead soldiers are mine, and they are all veterans, and all brave. This is myself," and he held up a bent and battered relic on a three-legged horse.

"And who are you in these fights, Goosey?"

"Napoleon, generally; often Cæsar and Frederick, and sometimes George Washington and General Lee."

"But you have no head. Isn't that a drawback for a commander?"

"Not with troops like these. I lost that head at Quebec, as Montcalm."

She looked down upon him with a wish that she also might have been one of those absurd little soldiers and shared his victories.

"The cracks between the floor-boards," he continued, "are railroads, rivers, canals, stone walls, or mountain ranges, according to the campaign."

"They must have been a nuisance, though. Could not a soldier disappear and not return?"

"I should say he could! Why, those ravines are gorged with heroes, and that recalls the most humiliating event of my career. I was leading the charge of the Light Brigade, six of these cavalrymen, each representing a hundred men. I of course was in front, and it was a supreme moment. As we dashed across the open field — the cracks, mind you, did n't count this time — I, the leader, suddenly disappeared, head downward, feet up, in an open field! Of

course the charge could not stop, and the others rushed on to a magnificent death."

With a sigh he gathered the motley company together again, and laid them away in their box. She got up and moved about. "I should like to live in an attic. It is mysterious and poetic, and so crammed with history. Each of these things has its little story for somebody," and she stopped before a curious feminine garment in India silk, of a long-ago fashion.

Pointing to a quaint old cap with ear-laps, she exclaimed, "What a funny rig that is! Put it on." And she took it from its peg and placed it upon his head, then laughed and led him to a broken mirror that was hanging from a rafter. "Unless you wear it in New York next winter, I shall never marry you!"

"Then I promise, but at present it is a trifle warm."

As he removed it a letter slipped from the lining and fell to the floor. She picked it up

and turned it over in her fingers. "Why, it has never been opened! It is directed to Mr. Josiah Judd."

Amos examined it, studied the date, then looked at the old cap. "He wore this at the time of his death, when he had just come from the post-office, and the Daleford postmark says December fifth, the very day before. That is very curious." And he stood looking down at the letter, deep in thought.

"Why don't you open it? You are the one who should do it, I suppose."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Where is it from?"

"India. From Mr. Morton Judd, his brother, the one who sent me here."

"Oh, yes! I remember. Is Mr. Morton Judd alive?"

"No, he died ten years ago."

"Well, please open it, for it may be interesting. Come over near the light."

As they stood by the open window, leaning against the sill, he tore open the envelope and began reading aloud, she looking idly out upon some haymakers in a neighboring field. Their voices came faintly to her ears, and they made a pleasant picture in the afternoon sunlight with the village spires, the tall elms, and the purple hills for a background. She wondered if India was at all like New England.

DEAR JOSIAH: The case ought to reach you about a fortnight after this letter, and if you will write to Mr. Wharton, or better still, visit him, he will see that there is no trouble at the Custom House. Give my love to Sarah, but don't show her the shawl and the silks before her birthday, in January. What you say about the boy Amos does not surprise me, and I was only waiting for you to make your own discoveries. He gave clear indications when a very small child of this same faculty

in which his mother and the rest of his family had great faith. In the box you will receive I send a book giving an account of the Rajah Sirdar Sing, his ancestor, a hero of prophetic powers who died ninety-eight years ago, so this boy, according to tradition, should inherit the same supernatural faculties. Be careful that he does not see this book before coming of age, as it might put dangerous ideas into his head, and if he should suspect what he really is great mischief might ensue. I am glad he is turning out such a sensible boy. But if he should ever come over here and make himself known it would cause a great disturbance, and might result fatally to himself. Am sorry to hear about Phil Bates's wife. She was a fool to marry him. Your affectionate brother,

MORTON JUDD.

Amos stood looking down at the letter and remained silent. She laid a hand upon his arm

and said, "What does it mean, Amos, about not letting you know who you are? Who are you?"

He looked up with a smile. "I don't know; I can only guess."

"Well, what do you guess?"

"I guess that I am the rajah of that province."

"Really? Why, you don't mean it! And have you always known it?"

"I don't know it now, but I have always suspected it."

"You funny old thing! Why, this is awfully exciting! And you never told me!"

"Why should I? Your father would only have hastened my departure if I had tried to pass myself off as a fairy prince; and you would have laughed in my face."

"No. I am not so sure. But that was long ago, and to-day I should believe anything you told me."

"Well, I believe you would," and there, at the open window, he put his arm about her waist and did that unnecessary thing true lovers seem unable to resist. She jumped away to turn with an anxious face and look cautiously through the window. But the distant haymakers gave no signs of having received a shock.

"Could they have seen?" she demanded.

He looked over upon the sunlit field. "No, poor things, they missed it!"

But Molly moved away and seated herself upon a venerable little horse-hair trunk whose bald spots were numerous and of considerable extent. Brass-headed nails, now black with age, studded all its edges and formed at each end the initials of Josiah Judd.

"Tell me, little Amos, what happened to you as a child, that you should consider yourself a fairy prince."

The trunk was short for two, but Amos, by

a little pushing and crowding, managed to sit beside her.

"Well, in the first place, I was always too wise and too amiable for an ordinary mor—"

"No, no! Be serious."

"Well, almost everything I remember seems to point in that direction. For instance, there was a separate seat for me on swell occasions; a sort of throne, I should say, and all the other people stood up. In the big hall I told you about where the fight took place, I used to sit in an ivory chair with gold ornaments on it, cocked up on a platform apart from other people. And that afternoon I was walking across the hall toward it when the fierce-looking chap with the beard caught me up and passed me along."

"Gracious! This is very exciting! Go on."

"I could give you this sort of stuff by the yard if the conditions were favorable. The conditions now are unfavorable."

Their eyes met, but experience had taught her caution. "Go on. There are no rajahs in America, and you will do as I tell you."

"That is very true, but we are too far apart."

"And all the while you are crowding me off this trunk!"

"Yes, but at the same time I am holding you on. Do you see that old rocking-chair over there with one arm that is beckoning to us?"

There followed a brief, illogical discussion, then finally a gentle force was used by the stronger party, and a moment later the old chair groaned beneath a heavier burden than it had borne for thirty years.

After persistent urging the reminiscences were continued. "They always helped me first at table, no matter how old the other guests were, or how many or how swell. The bowing and saluting was much more elaborate toward

me than toward anyone else, and in processions they always stuck me in front. Shortly after my father died there was a grand ceremony in a sort of courtyard with awnings over us, and I remember what an everlasting affair it was, and how my uncle and an old general stood behind my chair, while all the swells and panjandrums came up and saluted me, then passed along. I should say there might have been a million. I know I went to sleep and my uncle kept tapping me on the shoulder to keep me awake."

"You poor little thing! But you must really have been something tremendously important, must n't you?"

"It seems so."

"Well, go on."

"After that there were some big reviews, and I sat on a white pony with officers in a semicircle behind me, while the troops marched by, and the generals and colonels all saluted.

That was great fun. And I shall never forget my saddle of crimson leather with the gold trimmings."

"How romantic! Why, it seems impossible!"

"Do you remember the head-dress in my mother's miniature?"

"Yes."

"Well, I find that sort of thing is only worn by royalty."

There was a pause, during which the old chair rocked gently to and fro, but noisily, as if in protest against its double burden, while the voices from the neighboring field came drifting in the window and with them the occasional tinkling of a cow-bell.

"And to think of your being here in Connecticut, a farmer!"

"Thank heaven I am!" and there followed one of those foolish but apparently enjoyable scenes which no dignified historian is expected to describe. Stepping away from the rocking-

chair Molly turned with a frown upon its remaining occupant as she pressed an escaping lock into position. Through the open window the setting sun sent a bar of light across the attic that illumined her hair with a golden touch.

"We must find that book," she exclaimed, with an impatient gesture. "It will tell us the very things we wish to know. Come, get up, and hunt!"

Slowly rocking, with his head resting against the chair, he regarded her with admiring eyes, but showed no signs of haste. "There is but one book I care to study, and that is a poem in pink, about five feet six in length, with gilt edges at the top."

She smiled sadly. "No, not a poem, but very ordinary prose, and you will get precious little wisdom from studying it."

"On the contrary, every page is a revelation. Why, the binding alone is a poem! Merely

to hold it in one's lap and look at the cover is a gentle intoxication."

Wavering between a smile and a frown, she answered:

"I wonder if all rajahs are such transparent flatterers. But come! Find the book! It must be downstairs in the library."

"No, it is not down there. I know every book among them."

"Where can it be, then? tucked away in some trunk or drawer?"

"Probably."

"Could it be in that?" and she pointed to an old cherry-wood desk just behind him. He turned and regarded it.

"As likely there as anywhere. It is the desk he used until he died."

Molly opened the slanting top and found an array of pigeonholes filled with old papers. There were some very small drawers, all of which she opened, but they contained no

book, so she closed the top and opened the long upper drawer. It was almost empty, the only contents being a few envelopes of seeds, some tools, scattered cards, and a couple of marbles that ran about as the drawer was opened.

"I rather think you know this place," and she lifted up a bladeless jackknife. "Only a boy could treat a knife in such a way."

"Yes, I remember all those things. That wooden pistol has killed lots of Indians."

The second drawer held among other things a camel's-hair shawl, a bed-cover, a pair of woman's slippers, a huge shell-comb elaborately carved, some black mits, and a package of letters; almost everything except a book. The third drawer and the fourth were equally disappointing. The lowest drawer was deeper and heavier, and it stuck. Amos sprang to help her, and together they pulled it open, then sat down upon the floor in front of it. The char-

acter of its contents was much like the others, but Molly delved thoroughly among its treasures and she received her reward. As her hand was exploring a farther corner she looked up into his face with a look of excitement.

"Here is a book! It must be the one!" and a little volume was drawn forth.

"'The Heroes of India!' are n't we in luck!"

It was a handsome little book, with a blue morocco cover and gilt edges, published in Calcutta. Turning over the leaves with eager fingers she came to a bookmark opposite a portrait, a steel engraving, showing the head and shoulders of a bejewelled prince.

"Why, it might be you! It is exactly like you! Look!" and she held it before him.

"So it is, but perhaps they all are. Let's hear about him if you are sure he is our man."

"Oh, I am sure of it! He is the image of you and the others are not;" and she began to read.



"Of all the royal families in India, none claim an existence more remote than that of the Maharaja Sirdar Oumra Sing. According to accepted history and tradition, this princely house not only dates back to the earliest centuries of Eastern history, but owes its origin to the immortal Vishn'u himself. It is a romantic story, in fact the survival of an ancient fable, poetic and supernatural, but, curiously enough, seems to be substantiated by the extraordinary attributes of a recent ruler. The Rajah Sirdar Sing, whose portrait heads this article, was perhaps the most popular hero of Northern India, and unless we eject the evidence of all his contemporaries, was possessed of powers that brought him the most startling victories both in peace and war, and over adversaries that were considered invincible. His kingdom, during his reign of thirty years, was nearly doubled in territory and enormously increased in wealth. In his own country to-day there

are none who question his prophetic powers: men of science and of letters, historians, high priests, lawyers, soldiers, all firmly believe in his immortal gifts. To us Europeans, however, these tales are more difficult of acceptance.

"In the very centre of Sirdar Sing's forehead the reader may have observed a faint spot scarcely half an inch in diameter, and this appeared, we are told, like a scar or a burn, of a lighter color than the skin and, except under certain conditions, was barely noticeable. But the tradition runs that when exercising his prophetic faculty this little spot increased in brilliancy and almost glowed, as if of flame."

"And so does yours!" and she regarded him with a look of awe.

"Go ahead," he said, looking down at the book. "Let us hear the rest."

"The legend is this:

"When Vishn'u in his Kr'ishn'a-Avatâra, or eighth incarnation, was hard-pressed in his war against the Kurus, he received great assistance from Arjuna, a Pân'd'u prince who, after a four days' battle, and at great risk to himself, delivered to his immortal ally the sacred city of Dwârakâ. For this service and in token of his undying gratitude, Vishn'u laid his finger upon the forehead of Arjuna and endowed him with a knowledge of future events, also promising that once in a hundred years a descendant should possess this priceless gift. Although we may not accept this romantic tale, there is no doubt whatever that Sirdar Sing, the original of our portrait, was guided by a knowledge of the future, either earthly or divine, which neither scientists nor historians have yet explained. The next in order to inherit this extraordinary faculty, if there is truth in the legend, will be the son of the

present rajah, whose nuptials have just been celebrated with such lavish and magnificent festivities."

She paused for a moment, then with trembling fingers turned back to the title-page. The book was printed twenty-eight years ago, the year before Amos was born.

For a long time they sat on the floor talking; she asking many questions and he answering, until the listening objects in the attic began to lose their outline and become a part of the gloom. The sunlight along the rafters dwindled to a narrow strip, then disappeared; and the voices of the haymakers were long since gone when Amos and Molly finally climbed to their feet and descended the stairs.

IX

SEPTEMBER brought other guests, and with their arrival Amos Judd and Molly Cabot found the easy, irresponsible routine of their happy summer again disturbed. To his own fierce regret Amos could invent no decent pretext for escaping a visit he had promised early in the summer, and a more unwilling victim never resigned himself to a week of pleasure. To the girl he was to leave behind him, he bewailed the unreasonable cruelty of his friends. "This leaving you, Soul of my Soul, is worse than death. I shall not eat while I am gone, and nights I shall sit up and curse."

But at the end of a week he returned, promptly on the minute. His moments of depression, however, seemed rather to increase than diminish, and, although carefully repressed, were visible to a pair of watchful eyes. Upon his face when in repose there had

always been a melancholy look, which now seemed deepening as from an inward sorrow, too strong to conquer. This was betrayed occasionally by a careless speech, but to her questioning he always returned a cheerful answer. In spite of these heroic efforts to maintain a joyful front, Molly was not deceived, and it was evident, even to Mr. Cabot, that the young man was either ill in body or the victim of a mental disturbance that might be disastrous in its results. Of this he was destined to have a closer knowledge than his daughter. It came about one Sunday morning, when the two men had climbed a neighboring hill for a view which Mr. Cabot had postponed from week to week since early June. This was his last Sunday in Daleford and his final opportunity.

The view was well worth the climb. The day itself, such a day as comes oftenest in September, when the clear air is tempered to

the exact degree for human comfort by the rays of a summer sun, was one in which the most indifferent view could shine without an effort. Below them, at the foot of the hill, lay the village of Daleford with its single street. Except the white spires of the churches, little of it could be seen, however, beneath the four rows of overhanging elms. Off to their left, a mile or two away, the broad Connecticut, through its valley of elms, flowed serenely to the sea; and beyond, the changing hills took on every color from the deepest purple to a golden yellow. A green valley on their right wandered off among the woods and hills, and in it the stately avenue of maples they both knew so well. A silence so absolute and so far-reaching rested upon the scene that, after a word or two of praise, the two men, from a common impulse, remained without speaking. As thus they sat under the gentle influence of a spell which neither cared to break, the notes

of an organ came floating upward from the trees below them, and mingled with the voices of a choir. Mr. Cabot's thoughts turned at once to the friend at his side, whom he felt must experience a yet deeper impression from these familiar scenes of his childhood. Turning to express this thought, he was so struck by the look upon Amos's face, an expression of such despairing melancholy, that he stopped in the middle of his sentence. While well aware that these tragic eyes were always most pathetic objects in repose, he had never seen upon a human face a clearer token of a hopeless grief.

"What is it, my boy?" he asked, laying a hand upon the knee beside him. "Tell me. I may be able to help you."

There was a slight hesitation and a long breath before the answer came. "I am ashamed to tell you, Mr. Cabot. I value your good opinion so very much that it comes hard to let you

know what a weak and cowardly thing I have been, and am."

"Cowardly — that I do not believe. You may be weak; all of us are that; in fact, it seems to be the distinguishing attribute of the human family. But out with it, whatever it is. You can trust me."

"Oh, I know that, sir! If you were only less of a man and more like myself, it would be easier to do it. But I will tell you the whole story. By the fourth of November I shall not be alive, and I have known it for a year."

Mr. Cabot turned in surprise. "Why do you think that?"

But Amos went on without heeding the question.

"I knew it when I asked Molly to be my wife; and all the time that she has gone on loving me more and more, I have known it, and done all I could to make things worse. And now, as the time approaches and I realize

that in a few weeks she will be a broken-hearted woman — for I have learned what her affection is and how much I am to her — now I begin to see what I have done. God knows it is hard enough to die and leave her, but to die only to have played a practical joke on the girl for whom I would joyfully give a thousand lives if I had them, is too much."

He arose, and standing before her father, made a slight gesture as of surrender and resignation. The older man looked away toward the distant river, but said nothing.

"Listen, sir, and try to believe me." Mr. Cabot raised his glance to the dark face and saw truth and an open heart in the eyes fixed solemnly upon his own; and he recognized a being transformed by a passion immeasurably stronger than himself.

"When I found she loved me I could think of nothing else. Why should I not be happy for the short time I had to live? Her love was

more to me than any earthly thing, than any possible hereafter. Better one summer with her than to live forever and not have known her. Oh! I thought of her side of it, often and often; many a night I have done nothing else, but I could no more give her up than I could lift this hill." He paused, drew a long breath, as if at the hopelessness of words to convey his meaning, then added, very calmly:

"Now I am soberer, as the end approaches, and I love her more than ever: but I will do whatever you say; anything that will make her happier. No sacrifice can be too great, and I promise you I will make it. I have often wished the bull had killed me that day, then I should have her love and respect forever; and yours too, perhaps."

"You have both now, Amos. But tell me why you think you are to die by November fourth?"

Amos resumed his seat upon the rock and

answered: "Because I have seen myself lying dead on that day."

"I have sometimes wondered," said Mr. Cabot, "if that temptation would not prove too strong for you."

"No, sir, it was not too strong for me under ordinary circumstances, but it happened when I was not myself, when I came out of that fever last October, and as I lay in bed, weak and half-conscious, I felt sure my day had come. I thought the doctor was not telling me the truth, so, by looking ahead for myself, I learned more than I cared to know, and saw myself lying on a sofa in a strange room, a place I had never been into; a public building, I should think."

"But why do you think it is to be the fourth of November, and this year?"

"Because I looked about and saw near a window a little day calendar, and that was the date it bore. Then on a table lay a daily paper

of the day before, and two magazines of the same month, all of this year."

"But is it not possible the room is unoccupied and that these things have been lying there indefinitely?"

Amos shook his head. "No, sir, it is a room that is lived in. There are other papers lying about: books, and a letter on the desk waiting to be mailed. And in the fireplace the embers are still glowing."

Mr. Cabot looked with the profoundest sympathy toward his friend, who was scaling bits of moss from the rock beside him; then he turned again to the view and its tranquil beauty seemed a mockery. In the village below them he could see the congregation pouring out from a little white church like ants from a loaf of sugar. Mr. Cabot was not a religious man, and at present there was nothing in his heart that could be mistaken for resignation. His spirit was in revolt, his pugnacity

aroused, and with this quality he was freely endowed. Rising to his feet he stood for a moment in silence, with folded arms, frowning upon the distant hills.

"Amos," he said, finally, "in spite of bygone defeats I am inclined to resist this prophecy of yours. You were not absolutely master of your own mind at the time, and under such conditions nothing would be easier than to confuse your own imagining with a vision of another character. At least it is not impossible, and if by good luck you did happen to confound one with the other we are having our panic for nothing. Moreover, even if this vision is correct, it need not necessarily signify an undeviating fulfilment in every detail. It may indicate the result to be expected in the natural order of events; that is, if things are allowed to take their course without obstruction or intervening influences. But it is difficult for me to believe this faculty is to continue infallible

through all your mental and physical developments and fluctuations of faith, and never, under any possible conditions, vary a hair's-breadth from the truth. It is a law of nature that a disused faculty shall weaken and lose its power, and for years you have done your best to repress and forget it."

"Yes, sir, but whenever employed it has been correct."

"That may be, and its day of failure still remain a probability. In this present case the prophecy, aside from its uncertain origin, is one whose fulfilment is more easy to avert than some of the others. You say the room in which you saw yourself is one you are unfamiliar with, and consequently is not in Daleford."

"Oh, no! There is nothing like it in this vicinity."

"Well, suppose you were to remain in Daleford during the critical period with two men, nominally visitors at your house, to watch you

day and night and see that you do not escape? Or, better still, let me send you to an institution in which I am a director, where you will be confined as a dangerous patient, and where escape, even if you attempted it, would be as hopeless as from a prison."

Amos doubted the success of any attempt at foiling fate, or, in other words, giving the lie to a revelation once received, but he was willing to do whatever his friend desired. As they walked home they discussed the plan in detail and decided to act upon it; also to take every precaution that Molly should be kept in ignorance.

The first week in October the house at the north end of the avenue was empty and the Cabots were in New York. As the end of the month approached a little tale was invented to explain the cessation for a time of Amos's visits, and early one afternoon the two men got into a cab and were driven to the out-

skirts of the city. They entered the grounds of a well-known institution, were received by the superintendent and one or two other officials, then, at the request of the elder visitor, were shown over the entire building and into every room of any size or importance. When this inspection was over Mr. Cabot took his companion aside and asked if he had seen the room they sought. Amos shook his head and replied that no such room could be within the grounds. A few minutes later the young man was shown to a chamber where his trunk had preceded him. The two friends were alone for a moment, and as they separated Amos gave the hand in his own a final pressure, saying: "Don't think I am weakening, Mr. Cabot, but I cannot help feeling that I have seen Molly for the last time. And if you and I never meet again, you may be sure my last thoughts were with you both."

In a cheerful tone the lawyer answered: "I

shall listen to no such sentiments. If your prophecy is correct you are to be lying in a room outside these grounds on November fourth. No such prophecy can be carried out. And if the prophecy is incorrect we shall meet for several years yet. So good-by, my boy. I shall be here the third."

During ten days Amos was to remain under the strictest watch, to be guarded by two men at night and by two others in the day-time, and to be permitted under no conditions to leave that wing of the building. By the subordinate in charge and by the four guardians he was believed to be the victim of a suicidal mania. As the fourth of November approached Mr. Cabot's thoughts were less upon his business than with his imprisoned friend. He remembered with what inexorable force he himself had been held to the fulfilment of a prediction. He had felt the hand of an unswerving fate; and he had not forgotten.

But the fourth of November came and went with no serious results, and when the five succeeding days had safely passed he experienced a relief which he was very careful to conceal. With friendly hypocrisy he assumed a perfect confidence in the result of their course, and he was glad to see that Amos himself began to realize that anything like a literal fulfilment of his vision was now improbable.

One week later, the last day of durance, the prisoner and Mr. Cabot had an interview with Dr. Chapin in the latter's private office. Dr. Chapin, the physician in charge, an expert of distinction in mental disorders, was a man about sixty years of age, short, slight, and pale, with small eyes, a very large nose, and a narrow, clean-shaven face. His physical peculiarities were emphasized by a complete indifference as to the shape or quality of his raiment; his coat was a consummate misfit, and his trousers were baggy at the knees. Even the

spectacles, which also fitted badly, were never parallel with his eyes and constantly required an upward shove along his nose. But a professional intercourse with this gentleman led to a conviction that his mental outfit bore no relation to his apparel. Mr. Cabot had known him for years, and Amos felt at once that he was in the presence of a man of unusual insight. Dr. Chapin spoke calmly and without pretension, but as one careful of his speech and who knew his facts.

"That you should have made that visit against your will," he said to Mr. Cabot in answering a question, "is not difficult to explain as Mr. Judd unconsciously brought to bear upon your movements a force to which he himself has repeatedly yielded. If he happens to remember, I think he will find that his thoughts were with you at that time," and he smiled pleasantly on Amos.

"Yes, sir, but only as a matter of interest in

the novel experience I knew Mr. Cabot was going through."

"Certainly, but if you had forgotten the visit and if you believed at that moment that he was to go in another direction, Mr. Cabot would have followed the other thought with equal obedience. This unconscious control of one intelligence over another is well established and within certain limits can be explained, but in these affairs science is compelled to accept a barrier beyond which we can only speculate. In this case the unusual and the most interesting feature is the unvarying accuracy of your visions. You have inherited something from your Eastern ancestors to which a hypothesis can be adjusted, but which is in fact beyond a scientific explanation. I should not be at all surprised to find somewhere in the city the room in which you saw yourself lying; and it is more than probable that, if unrestrained, you would have discovered it and fulfilled your

prophecy, unconsciously obedient to that irresistible force. A blow, a fall, a stroke of apoplexy or heart disease; the sudden yielding of your weakest part under a nervous pressure, could easily bring about the completion of your picture. Some of the authenticated reports of corresponding cases are almost incredible. But before you are forty, Mr. Judd, you will find in these visions a gradual diminution of accuracy and also, as in this case, that their fulfilment is by no means imperative."

For Amos there was immense relief in hearing this, especially from such a source, and he left the building with a lighter heart than he had known for months. Now that the danger was over, he wished the wedding to take place at once, but Molly would consent to no undignified haste. He found, however, an unexpected and influential ally in her grandmother Jouvenal, just arrived from her home in Maryland for a month's visit, and who insisted upon the

wedding taking place while she was with them. Mrs. Jouvenal was a slender person of sprightly manners, whose long life had been sweetly tempered by an exaggerated estimate of the importance of her own family; but in other matters she was reasonable and clear-headed, endowed with quick perceptions, a ready wit, and one of those youthful spirits that never grow old. She was interested in all that went on about her, was never bored and never dull. It was of course a little disappointing that a girl with such an ancestry as Molly's, on her mother's side, should give herself to an unknown Judd from an obscure New England village; but her fondness for Amos soon consoled her for the mésalliance. Molly had a strong desire to acquaint her grandmother with the ancestral facts of the case, but Amos refused to give his consent. Those discoveries in the attic he insisted they must keep to themselves, at least while he was alive. "When

I am transplanted I shall be beyond the reach of terrestrial snobs, and you can do as you please."

The first week in December Mrs. Jouvenal was to visit her son in Boston. "And really, my child," she said to Molly, "it is the last wedding in the family I shall be alive to see, and with such an exotic specimen as you have selected, I shall not be sure of a Christian ceremony unless I see it myself."

As her father remained neutral Molly finally yielded, and there was a wedding the first Wednesday in December.

X

"DO I look tired and dragged out?" asked the bride of an hour as they drove to the train.

"You look a little tired, a little flushed, a little ashamed, and tremendously interesting. But you may hold my hand."

"I *am* ashamed," and she pushed the upturned hand from her lap and looked out the window.

"But, Light of my Soul, you give us away by those imbecile blushes. You might just as well thrust your head out of the carriage and cry, 'Behold the bride and groom!'"

She smiled and leaned back, but still looked out. "That's the horrid feature of a honeymoon. Everybody knows it and everybody looks at you. Is it too late to go back and undo it?"

"What a bloodcurdling thought!"

"And it should n't rain on our wedding-day, little Amos."

"Of course it rains. These are the tears of countless lovers who lived before the days of Molly Cabot."

But they left the rain behind them, and farther South, away down in Carolina, they found plenty of sunshine, with green grass and flowers and piny woods.

One of their first diversions on reaching this southern country was to go out with a driver and a pair of horses, but the harvest of pleasure was insufficient. "The conversation of a honeymoon," observed the bridegroom, "is too exalted for other ears. If we talk as the spirit moves us, the coachman, unless in love himself, may collapse from nausea: so let us be merciful and drive ourselves."

Thereupon he secured a buggy with an old gray horse, and from this combination their felicity was much increased. The old horse

they called Browser, because of the only thing he would do without being urged; and it required but a single drive to develop his good points, which happened to be the very qualities required. He was dreamy, inattentive, never hasty, and not easily disgusted. His influence was distinctly restful, and his capacity for ignoring a foolish conversation phenomenal. It was decided by his present associates that these virtues were either hereditary, or had been developed to the highest perfection by a long and tender experience.

"It's my opinion," remarked the groom, "that being so extensively used as a nuptial horse has resulted in his regarding honeymoon foolishness as the usual form of conversation. He probably thinks they talk that way in the courts and on the Stock Exchange."

But accustomed as Browser was to cloying repetitions, there were times when his endurance was sorely tried. On one occasion the

bride alighted from the buggy, and going a little ahead, gathered wild flowers by the roadside; and as she returned, Amos, who was giving Browser a handful of grass, raised his hat in a ceremonious manner and advanced toward her with extended hand, exclaiming:

"Why, Miss Cabot! How do you do? I had no idea you were here. My name is Judd."

"I beg your pardon," she replied, drawing stiffly back, "your name is not Judd, and you don't know what it is. I can never marry a man who—"

"Wait till you are asked," he interrupted, then threw both arms about her, and so they stood for a moment, she making no effort to escape.

Browser blushed and turned away.

In secluded corners of the vast and ramifying hotel piazza they spent long evenings and watched the moon, the other people, and the distant ocean, and talked, and talked, and

talked. Of this talk no serious pen could write. The very ink would laugh or turn to sugar and run away in shame. And when these conversations were finished, two well-dressed and seemingly intelligent people would arise, and with brazen faces enter the grand rotunda of the hotel, where other guests would see them enter the elevator, float heavenward and disappear from human eyes. But the vexatious color still came and went in Molly's face, and seemed ever ready to give the lie to the gentle dignity and composure which rarely deserted her. Strolling through the gardens of the hotel one afternoon, they met a stately matron with her two daughters, whom Molly knew, and as they separated after the usual conversation, Amos jeered at the bride, saying: "Really, old Girl, it is mortifying the way you blush upon this trip. I don't blame the blushes for selecting such a face, but you only give yourself away. It is merely another manner of

saying 'I know I am guilty, and just see how ashamed I am!'"

"Oh, don't talk about it! It's hideous, but I can't help it. Are all brides such fools?"

"I don't know, I never travelled with one before, but I shall leave you behind if you keep it up. Try and think you have been married for twenty years. Do you suppose the daisies giggle and the sun winks at the other planets every time we look out the window? Or that it is because Molly and Amos are spliced that the carnations blush and the violets hide their faces? But I will say this for you, Spirit of Old-fashioned Roses, that all this blushing and unblushing is tremendously becoming."

"Thank you; but I must paint or wear a veil, or only come out at night. There is no other way."

The days went by, all much alike, in the sunny atmosphere of an overwhelming content. In the woods they found a distant spot which

laid no claim to publicity, and here upon the pine carpet with the drowsy rustling of the leaves above, they passed many hours in a serene indifference to the flight of time. Sometimes they brought a book, not a page of which was ever read, but no deceit was necessary, as the only witnesses were occasional birds and squirrels whose ideas of decorum were primitive and none too strict. One bird, who seemed to wear a dress-suit with an orange shirt-front, considered his household in danger and acquired an insolent habit of perching himself upon a bough within a dozen feet, and doing his best to scare them off. But as they reappeared day after day and respected his rights his anger gradually diminished, until at last he varied his vituperations by a peculiar song, both joyous and triumphant, which amused the interlopers.

"I should like to know what his little feelings really are," said the bride, as with a pine-

needle she annoyed the sensitive portions of the head reposing in her lap. The upturned eyes lingered for a moment upon the patch of blue between the pine-tops, then with a look of mild surprise turned lazily to her own.

"Do you really mean to confess, Gentle Roses, that you don't know what he says?"

As this speech was uttered the instrument of torture was cleverly inserted between the parted lips. "No; and perhaps I don't care to."

"But listen. There! Don't you get it? He knows we are on a honeymoon and keeps repeating, in that victorious way:

"Amos has got her!
Amos has got her!"

The bride laughed; her face bent over to the one beneath, but the bird upon the bough was not disgusted. He stood his ground and sang his song as if Love and Folly were things to be respected.

When the day of departure came they turned their backs with sorrow upon a resting-place whose cosey corners they knew so well and whose groves no grateful lovers could forget. These tender memories were a soothing recompense for descending to an earthly life. As the train moved away she whispered, "Good-by, honeymoon!"

"Don't say that!" exclaimed Amos. "Let us hold on to it forever. I shall die a lover and I expect the same of you."

The promise to Grandmother Jouvenal was not forgotten, and when they left the train at a little station in Maryland a carriage was awaiting them. As they entered the avenue and came in sight of the old house, Molly regarded her companion with eager eyes to be sure that he was properly impressed.

"It's fine!" he exclaimed. "An ideal mansion of the period. And you say it is over two hundred years old?"

"Yes, the main house is, but just wait till you see the inside! It's crammed full of colonial furniture and family portraits."

"What on earth is the circular part at the end of that wing? Is it a circus or only a gymnasium for your grandmother?"

Molly laughed. "That's the library. Grandpa's father was an astronomer and started to build an observatory, but died when it was half-way up; so grandpa, who was not an astronomer, finished it as a library. But it makes a beautiful room."

From her grandmother they received a cordial welcome. It was dark when they arrived, and as Mrs. Jouvenal had accepted for them an invitation to a dance that evening at the house of a neighbor, whose daughters were old playmates of Molly's, there was little time for seeing the house. But Molly did not like to wait and proposed a hasty tour, wishing to show Amos at once the old portraits and fur-

niture and the treasures of family silver. To this her grandmother objected. "Do wait till to-morrow, child. Your Amos can sleep without it, and besides the rooms are not in order yet. Remember I only came back myself this morning, after a two months' absence."

And so that pleasure was delayed. They arrived early at the ball, and as she joined him at the head of the stairs he glanced at the jewels in her hair and asked, after a moment's hesitation, if she would do him a little favor.

"Of course I will. Only name it, dusky Rajah," and looking up at him with admiring eyes she smiled as she remembered for the hundredth time how seriously he was annoyed by any compliment upon his appearance.

"Are you very much attached to that crescent in your hair?"

"If I were it should make no difference. You don't like it, and that's enough," and she

raised her hand to remove the ornament. But he interrupted the motion. "Don't take it off now, for you have nothing to replace it; but that is the smallest part of the request. The real favor is that you shall not ask me why I do it."

"That is asking a good deal, but I consent. And now tell me, how do I look? There is a wretched light in there."

"You look like what you are, the joy of to-day and the rainbow of a happy morrow."

"No, be serious. Is my hair in every direction?"

He regarded her gravely and with care. "Your hair is just right, and for general effect you are far and away the prettiest, the daintiest, the most highbred-looking girl within a thousand miles of this or of any other spot; and if we were alone and unobserved, I should gather you in as—" Voices close at hand caused them to turn and descend the stairs

with the solemnity of an ancient couple who find dignity a restful substitute for the frivolities of youth. Once in the ball-room, with the wild Hungarian music at their heels, there was little repose for two such dancers. When the first notes of the waltz that Molly loved above all others, came floating through the hall, Amos cut in before a youth who was hastening toward the bride and swung her out across the floor. As they glided away with the music that was stirring in her heart old memories of what seemed a previous existence, she heard at her ear "Do you remember when first we waltzed? How you did snub me! But life began that night."

Instead of returning at eleven o'clock, they returned at two in the morning. By Amos's request it had been arranged that no servant should sit up for them, but when they entered the hall and found it dark Molly expressed surprise that not a single light should have

been left burning. They easily found the matches, however, and lighted a candle. Amos had just learned from the coachman that a letter ready at six in the morning would go by an early train, so Molly showed him a little desk of her grandmother's in the dining-room, and then left him to his writing. Passing through the hall toward the stairs she happened to look into a sitting-room, and beyond it, through a corridor, saw a portion of the big library where the moonlight fell upon a marble bust. She paused, then returning to the door of the dining-room, asked,

"How long shall you be at that letter, little prince?"

"Not five minutes."

"Then come into the library and see it in the moonlight. You will find a girl there who is interested in you."

"All right. That girl will not wait long."

Although familiar with the old library,

Molly was impressed anew by its stately proportions as she entered from the little corridor. The spacious room was now flooded by the moonlight that streamed through the high windows at the farther end and brought out, in ghostly relief, the white Ionic columns against the encircling wall. Between them, in varying shapes and sizes, hung the family portraits, and in front of every column stood a pedestal with its marble bust. At the present moment the pallid face of Dante caught the moonbeams, and seemed to follow her with solemn eyes. As she swept with a rustle of silk along the huge, round, crimson carpet, she remembered how deeply she had been impressed in former years by the knowledge that it was made in England expressly for this room. The perfect stillness was broken only by herself as she moved out into the wide circle of mysterious faces.

At her right, between two of the columns,

in a lofty mirror that filled the space from floor to cornice, marched her own reflection. She stopped, and regarded it. With her white dress and the moonlight upon her head and shoulders, it was a striking figure and recalled the night, a year ago, when she stood at the window of her chamber, and tried in vain to discover why such a vision should have startled Mr. Amos Judd. Mr. Amos Judd! How she hated him that night! Hated him! the dear, lovely, old, perfect Amos! She smiled, and beat time with a foot, humming a fragment of that bewitching waltz. And the crescent that he had asked her not to wear again, flashed back at her from the mirror. She would remove it now, upon the instant, and never more, not even to-night, should the dear boy be troubled by it. As her fingers touched the jewels she saw something in the mirror that sent the blood from her heart, and caused the hand to drop convulsively to her breast. Behind her,

across the room, in the shadow of a pedestal, were glistening two other things that moved like a pair of human eyes. With an involuntary cry she wheeled about, and before she could turn again at a sudden movement behind her, an arm was thrown about her waist, strong fingers clutched her throat and in her ear came a muttered warning: "Be quiet, lady, or it's up with yer!"

But the cry had reached Amos in the distant dining-room, and she heard his footsteps hurrying across the hall. The fingers tightened at her throat; she was pushed with violence into the shadow of the nearest column, and held there. Gasping, strangling, she seized instinctively with both hands the wrist that was squeezing the life from her body, but her feeble fingers against such a strength were as nothing. Pressing close upon her she saw the dim outline of a cap upon the back of a head, a big neck, and a heavy chin. With bursting

throbs the blood beat through her head and eyes, and she would have sunk to the floor but for the hands that held her with an iron force.

In this torture of suffocation came a blur, but through it she saw Amos spring into the room, then stop for a second as if to find his bearings.

"Moll," he said, in a half-whisper.

There was no answer. Fainting, powerless even to make an effort, she saw the man before her raise a revolver with his other hand, and take deliberate aim at the broad, white shirt-front, an easy target in the surrounding gloom. In an agony of despair she made a frenzied effort, struck up the weapon as the shot was fired, and sent the bullet high above its mark, through the waistcoat of a colonial governor.

The next instant the fingers were torn from her throat, and as she sank half-fainting to her knees, the two men in a savage tussle

swayed out into the room, then back with such force against a pedestal that it tottered, and with its heavy bust came crashing to the floor.

The struggling figures also fell. The burglar was beneath, and as he landed, his weapon was knocked from his hand. With a blow and a sudden twist Amos wrenched away, picked up the pistol, turned upon his swiftly rising foe, and sent a bullet through his skull. Without a sound the man sank back again to the floor.

"Are you hurt, Moll?" was the first question as Amos took a step toward the white, crouching figure. Her bare arm shot out into the moonlight and a finger pointed across the library. "There 's another! look out!"

The second man, in his stocking feet like his comrade, had crept from his hiding place, and as she pointed he swung up his pistol and pulled the trigger. But Amos was quicker. Shots in rapid succession echoed through the

house, two, three, perhaps half a dozen, she never knew; but she saw to her joy, that Amos at the end of it all was still standing, while the burglar, with a smothered malediction, tumbled heavily into an easy chair behind him, slid out of it to his knees, and pitched forward on his face. There was a convulsive twitching of the legs, and all was still again. Beneath him lay a bag into which, a few moments before, had been stuffed the ancestral silver.

As she climbed painfully to her feet, grasping with tremulous fingers a chair at her side, she saw Amos turn about, and with wavering steps, approach the column between the windows where, in the full light of the moon, hung a little calendar, and on it

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He uttered no sound, but his head drooped and he staggered back. Reeling against a low divan he fell his length upon it, and lay with



upturned face, motionless as the two men upon the floor.

Molly hastened to his side and bent over him with an anxious question. In the full rays of the moon her head and neck with the white dress were almost luminous against the dim recesses of the room behind; and his eyes rested with a dazed, half-frightened look on the diamond crescent, then fell to her face, and up again to the jewels in her hair. With an effort he laid a hand upon her shoulder and answered, with a feeble smile, "The end has come, my Moll."

"No, no. Don't say that! I'll send for the doctor and have him here at once!"

But the hand restrained her. "It's of no use. The ball went here, through the chest."

"But, darling, your life may depend upon it! You don't know."

"Yes—I do know. My own death, with you bending over me in the moonlight—in this

room—I saw before we ever met. The same vision again—when you stood before me in the conservatory, was what—startled me—that night, a year ago."

He spoke with difficulty, in a failing tone. There followed broken words; from the face against his own tears fell upon his cheek, and she murmured, "Take me with you, Amos."

"No—not that;" then slowly, in a voice growing fainter with each word, "but there is no Heaven without you, Spirit—of Old-fashioned—Roses."

A gentle pressure from the fingers that held her own, and in the moonlight lay a peaceful face where a smile still lingered on the lips.

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